# Pimentel warns of hi-tech fraud in automated polls

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER Sunday

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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## Sir Mick doesn't sound right for Rolling Stones

LONDON—He's 60, still singing, and now he's Sir Mick.

That evening, pro-knighthood rock-n-roll-loving crown Mick Jagger officially joined the British establishment Fri-day—and frankly any

SEE A2

# FPJ, Lacson finally meet

11 DAYS TO CHRISTMAS

Inmates at the La Union Provincial Jail handcrafted 200 lanterns to express the glowing spirit of the season on a 30-foot tree on display at the San Fernando City plaza.

## *Opposition rivals fail to patch up differences*

By Christine O. Avendaño and Michael Lim Ubac

THE TWO MEN contending to become the opposition standard-bearer have finally sat down to a meeting and are apparently working in earnest to settle their differences in time for the 2004 presidential elections.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson told the Inquirer in a phone interview that he met with Fernando Poe Jr. yesterday morning at a private residence, belying the earlier claims of Poe's supporters that the actor wanted the meeting to be held in the presence of witnesses.

The meeting—their second since November—was "very cordial," Lacson said. He said he and Poe would meet again. "Very soon," but this time in the company of a small group in thrash out details on how to unify the fractious opposition.

Asked whether he and Poe had settled the issue of who would give way to the other, Lacson said this was not discussed.

The senator declined to give details on what they talked about, but said: "All the speculations that [Poe] would file his candidacy [for president] on Dec. 16, and that he would accept the nomination [of the opposition Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino] are just that—speculations."

Lacson reiterated that he would not be filing his certificate of candidacy for president as well until things are threshed out between him and Poe.

"Expectations are high that the opposition will be united and will field a single slate of candidates," Lacson said, when asked about his feelings after his meeting with Poe.

Lacson said that at their rare

FULL

# RP lands 4th in SEA Games with 48 gold medals

By Ernesto Gonzales

HANOI—Wushu sparked a final five-gold splurge that included Mark Paragua's third victory Saturday as the Philippines finally overhauled Malaysia and secured fourth place overall in the 22nd Southeast Asian Games here.

The expected triumph by the nation's cagers and an unlikely win in the traditional host tug-of-war ignited the decisive closing surge of the Filipinos, who ended their campaign with a total of 48 gold medals on top of 84 silvers and 74 bronzes, and looked forward to an even more prominent finish when they stage the SEAG in Manila for the third time in 2005.

Malaysia, which captured a three-running 131 golds as host two years ago, finished first only 43 times while picking up 42 silver and 50 bronze medals.

Vietnam overwhelmed the 13-nation field in a manner rarely seen from an organizing country with a gold-silver-bronze tally of 136-95-93. Thailand was an unchanged second with 89-81-97 with Indonesia third with 55-67-97.

Philippine Olympic Committee president Cebu Dayrit, who had predicted at least a 40-gold harvest this time, paid tribute to the athletes who, despite the difficulties in their preparations, "competed in these games with dignity and honor."

He then asked for the cooperation and support of everyone to prove "that Filipinos can unite together behind our team" two years from now.

Dayrit later received the SEAG Federation banner together with former PSC commissioner and

FULL/A2

# First true-blue Pinay to train for space travel

By Volt Contreras

WHEN IRENE Mora says she loves her mother country, she isn't just paying lip service. Eleven years ago, she reconfirmed it by opting to give up her American citizenship and become a Filipino citizen.

Now at 32, Mora dreams of flying to outer space, and taking the Philippine flag with her.

This adventurous pilot, who studied at a commercial flying school in Florida, will undergo space flight training in a Russian fighter next year. She will be the first Filipino to train for space travel.

Mora's ultimate dream is to fly to outer space with a Philippine flag patch on her space suit, and to take a picture from up there of her native archipelago for all her fellow crew members to see.

How close is she to that dream?

"We're getting there. Just be patient," she smiled.

FULL/A11

THE FIRST Filipina most likely to orbit in space, pilot Irene Mora, will train in Russia.

# San Francisco school has Tagalog program

By Cathy Babao-Gaballa
Contributor

TOOTI think it was an elementary school in Manila.

A brightly colored billboard perched on an iron fence reads: "Ako ay mangga dahil Pilipino ako" ("I'm happy because I'm a Filipino.") On the concrete playground, dark-haired, morena-skinned children play basketball. In the distance, a child calls out to her grandmother, "Lola, here's my lunchbox po. I'm going to class now."

Actually, it's the Bessie Carmichael Elementary School

SAN FRANCISCO/A6

LIKE they never left home, Pil-Ams at the Bessie Carmichael Elementary School learn about their homeland.

# 'GMA does not listen to peace advisers'

A RANKING official of the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front has decried the alleged inability of the government's peace negotiators to influence the decisions of the country's top leaders with regard to the peace process.

Aboti Abdullaih Mantimasa, the MILF's vice chair for military affairs who also chairs the rebel group's peace negotiating panel, said President Macapagal-Arroyo appeared to be listening more to her military advisers than to her peace advisers.

Mantimasa said the military establishment was a "very big factor" in the peace process and its actions could determine and influence the resumption of the stalled talks and spell "success or failure in reaching a comprehensive peace agreement."

Formal peace talks between the government and the MILF are set to start in the first week of January 2004.

Mantimasa expressed his views on the peace process in a recent meeting with Saudi A. Dicol, the director general of the Center for the Promotion of Peace and Development in Mindanao (CCPDM).

Dicol, who sent a report on the meeting to the Inquirer, said Mantimasa had asked that his misgivings about the seeming impotence of the government's peace panel be communicated directly to the President. House Speaker Jose de Venecia and Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita

GMA/A10

**WEATHER FORECAST**

FORECAST [illegible]

Second FRONTPAGE

COMPUTER COUNT NOT FAIL-SAFE?

# Nene warns of hi-tech poll fraud

By Volt Contreras and Marlon P. Martí

**OPPOSITION Sen. Aquilino "Nene" Pimentel Jr. yesterday warned that the computerized elections in 2004 could give rise to more sophisticated and sneaky ways of pulling off poll fraud. Instead of ballot box stuffing, there could be "dilution switching," he said.**

Pimentel said that the system that the Commission on Elections is adopting would aid in again the manual removal and substitution of diskettes or tapes from the counting machines to fraudulent numbers, which in turn would be linked to the Comelec head office.

"The problem I see here is that the counting machines don't automatically send the results to Manila. The diskettes from those machines will need to be put into another set of machines," Pimentel told a media forum at the Senate.

There is danger that the diskettes could be switched during transport, said Pimentel, who lost his senatorial bid in 1995 because of the notorious "dagdag-bawas" (vote-padding and shaving) scheme.

When the diskettes which are small enough to fit in one's pocket could be switched, he said.

Pimentel suggested that the watchdog National Movement for Free Elections and the various political parties be allowed to go close to the actual "retrieval and transfer of the disks."

And the diskettes between machines should be sealed as well, he added.

Reacting to Pimentel's comments, Lim Consulting yesterday said it has developed but kept secret a system that would foil any attempt to rig the elections results.

Even if the disks were stolen and switched, these would have little value to those who would take them as the results would have already been transmitted to the main counting center, said Comelec chair Benjamin Abalos.

Also, some copies of the results would have already been given to the poll watchers of the different parties and Namfrel, he said.

And even if someone were to successfully take the disks, the thieves would have to break the codes first before they could use it, he added.

According to Abalos, there are about 220,000 electronic precincts throughout the country and the ballots from these precincts would be transported to the 1,011 municipal and city counting centers where more than 1,991 automated counting machines have been deployed.

Once the ballots reach the counting centers, they would be fed to the counting machines which would then generate the results for immediate transmission via satellite to the national count in Manila.

At the same time, seven copies of the results would be provided to the watchers of the different political parties and the citizens' arm.

Abalos said there will actually be three types of data which will contain data from each precinct, each municipality and each province, all of which would then be transported to Congress.

"We will use the disks only if there are discrepancies... We would refer to them in cases of protest," Abalos said.

In earlier briefings, Comelec said data-system technology experts had lauded as the most secure security measures that have been installed in each phase of the process—from the security seals on each ballot box to the multi-layer encryption of the results to foil any attempt to alter the results, to the numerous votes in each municipality and the dedicated transmission system.

Election officials said they have also set up on the top levels of the poll machinery, electronic officials and watchers to ensure strict security during the transport of the ballot boxes from the precincts to the municipal halls.

# Bets' filing 'circus' begins Monday

By Marlon P. Martí

With "COMELEC" begins Monday and the Commission on Elections has even acted to conference to be convinced about candidates for election office, projected to reach 450,000 hopefuls, begin filing their certificates of candidacy.

Leading the presidential aspirants expected to submit their certificates on the first day of filing is Sen. Panfilo Lacson, who had even stood in the Comelec that he would be filing it around 10 a.m.

Opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson, the standard-bearer of the opposition Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino faction, is also expected to file his certificate of candidacy for president on Monday, Comelec officials said.

Lacson, who had earlier said he might delay his candidacy to avoid a clash with Sen. Manuel Villar Jr., the administration standard-bearer, is now expected to file his certificate of candidacy on the first day of the filing period.

Villar is expected to file his certificate of candidacy on Tuesday, Dec. 16, the last day of the filing period.

Lacson's spokesman Edwin Lacierda said the senator would be filing his certificate of candidacy on Monday.

Lacierda said Lacson would be accompanied by his wife Nelia and their children.

Lacierda said Lacson would be filing his certificate of candidacy at the Comelec main office in Intramuros, Manila

# After legs, kidney, Robot's liver stricken

By TJ Burgonio

CAPTIVE Abu Sayyaf leader Galib Andang is sicker than his comrades would like him to be.

Andang, whose wounded left leg had to be amputated and who was earlier diagnosed with a kidney ailment, has also been found to have a liver problem, according to Col. Ronnie Lucero, military spokesman in Sulu.

Lucero yesterday said doctors at the Western Mindanao Command in Zamboanga City discovered that the 36-year-old Commander Robot was suffering from "hepatorenal syndrome," a condition that affects both the liver and kidneys. The doctors were still determining what organ was first stricken, Lucero said.

The kidney disorder was discovered on Wednesday, two days after Andang was taken to the military hospital for treatment of wounds sustained during the alleged gun battle that led to his arrest. Lucero said tests showed he had a "very high level" of creatinine.

On top of that, Lucero quoted doctors as saying, Andang had anemia, or a low hemoglobin count, and the bullet's right leg, which had also been operated on in the clogged bone, had developed infection.

Andang caught a bullet on each leg during the supposed shootout with government troops in Indanan, Sulu on Sunday night. He was flown to Manila and brought straight to the VMMC for emergency.

Local residents of Indanan, however, insisted no shootout had taken place in their vicinity.

Lucero insisted on looking at the bright side of things yesterday. His health condition is gradually improving.

The senior military officials might get their wish of finally being able to interrogate Andang "by next week." They are especially keen on grilling him about personalities who supposedly took cuts from the millions of dollars in ransom paid for foreign governments for the release of the Jovel hostages.

Lucero said the military was "open" to allowing the transfer of the Jordan-born mid-level Abu Sayyaf commander, who was Malaysian authorities, who wanted to interrogate him about his participation in the kidnapping and to question Malaysia about how good an...

# GMA: Truth about Sidapan will out

By Julius Lobog (Inquirer)
and Armand N. Nocum

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday expressed confidence the truth behind the Sidapan kidnapping would come out once a probe by the courts and prosecution of investigations is conducted.

"Let the light come out on the public and on the truth behind this most notorious incident in the history of crime and terrorism," said the President in a statement. "All the issues surrounding the Sidapan kidnapping can now be given light through the judicial process and no interested investigators," she said.

The President made the statement as Robert Ducoing Jr. and Leipang Wee, who led the negotiations for the release of the Sipadan kidnap victims, visited Arroyo at Malacañang. Ducoing, a Filipino businessman, is a close friend of Arroyo.

Ducoing and Wee, who had the support of the Libyan government, were able to secure the release of the Jovel hostages in September 2003 after a ransom of $25 million was paid.

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"Our priority is to ensure justice and we will pursue this without being distracted by the peripheral issues," she added.

The President had earlier said the rescues of Abu Sayyaf leader Galib Andang, alias Commander Robot, would bring closure to the Sipadan kidnap crisis.

She said Robot could also shed light on the links of the Abu Sayyaf with the international terrorist and other terrorist groups.

## Aventajado insisted

As the developed, Yusuf Mantaba, a Malaysian who negotiated for the release of nine Malaysian hostages, yesterday said that Aventajado had insisted on the payment of ransom as the sole means of securing the release of the 21 Sipadan hostages.

In a telephone interview from Malaysia, Mantaba said they were able to secure the release of three of nine Malaysian hostages while not paying any ransom. The nine Malaysians were released to Mantaba.

"But he did say he did not pay any thing," he said. What they did, he said, was to counter-act the influence of Abu Sayyaf members living in Jolo, Malaysia and gave them food, rice, noodle soup and other gloves.

"We also contacted Ulama and other religious leaders close to them. That was our strategy to divide the unity of the Abu Sayyaf," he said in broken English.

He said the conversations wherein Aventajado insisted on the payment of ransom was recorded with an audio recorder that was turned over to the government.

Mr. Aventajado said Robot wanted P30 million each for the three hostages — he wanted that P10 million for each hostage to go to the commander. He said, adding that the man did not include Aventajado's alleged bagging of a share of the ransom money.

## Tape voices

The Inquirer earlier quoted Mantaba and relatives of Wee as saying they had taped the long conversations negotiating for a share of the ransom by the Malaysians. Aventajado denied the existence of such a tape saying Mantaba called him up "Basically about is that Mantaba do, and calling Aventajado, 'who has threatened to use anybody who makes the negotiable.'

Mantaba told he would pay the tape to a group of Filipino reporters who will be here on Monday.

Among those present at the signal meeting in the Garden Hotel in Luzon-Lugo (2) were Dato Ahmad Fauzi, former education minister of Malaysia, and Dato Yong Teh, former chief minister of Sabah, he said.

According to Mantaba, the abu Sayyaf did not discuss anything about ransom being paid to anyone for the release of the hostages.

"But then another negotiating party came in and said 'What a coincidence! We want Sidapan abuse!' We think this is all talk here. What do you want? 'We want money!' he said, adding he is sure the negotiating party is...

He said they would have entered the release of another European hostage for free if not for the intervention of the "other negotiating party" who wanted money in the deal.

# Clerics back death for Pentagon

COTABATO CITY—Muslim clerics in South Central Mindanao have issued a death order against the Pentagon kidnap gang in Mamasapano for the kidnapping of a 20-year-old Chinese-Filipino businessman.

Sharia Muslims here said yesterday the Muslim clerics agreed kidnapping was a crime against humanity and should be punishable by death.

"Last night, I conferred with top religious personalities about how to resolve the latest kidnapping and they agreed that the death penalty be imposed on the kidnappers. Based on the pronouncement of these Islamic preachers, Ustadz Abdullah Sali also been operated on in the clogged bone, had developed infection.

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2003

# FPJ, Lacson ...

(continued on A-3)

meeting, he might take along either his aides, all call him Angelito Misagal, or his Army chief, Brendale Cimatu. As for Pro, Lacson said, the actor would only be joining his spokesperson Sen. Vicente Sotto III.

Both contenders have been proclaimed the standard-bearers by their respective opposition—the for the newly formed opposition coalition made up of the Lakas ng Bansa/Kilusang Pilipino, PDP-Laban and Democratic Filipino Struggle, which is supposedly the LDP for this but for Sen. Edgardo Angara; and Lacson, by his party mates at LDP belonging to the faction headed by Senate Rep. Agapito "Butz" Aquino.

Angara and Aquino are LDP president and secretary-general, respectively.

### Selection process

Roxanas said Lacson and Pro "talked about the selection process, not [the issue of] who will run for president."

"They will have to draw up a new selection process, the 'Pasig' agreement," Roxanas said in a phone interview, adding that the negotiations of the meeting was done the actor's predecessor, but Wednesday by the Roxanases, ng Kabalikatang Filipino nang mid.

The meeting was described as "most cordial" as to what press statement signed by Lacson through Roxanas, and Pro through Sotto.

The statement said the meeting "resulted in an agreement to undertake steps toward thrashing out the problems that seem to divide the opposition, and initiate unification."

"Both agreed in more again along with a small group of leaders that they will themselves directly, not to work more and success of unifying the opposition," it added.

### 101 percent

Sotto, however, told the Inquirer that Pro's candidacy was "101 percent sure."

"There's nothing anyone can say or do to make him withdraw. He puts the rough with his machismo," Sotto said.

He said that the Pro-Lacson meeting lasted less than 30 minutes, and that Lacson was accompanied by Roxanas and Sudy Moyo, an aide of the senator's.

Asked if it was in fact he and Angara who were behind Pro's decision to seek the presidency, Sotto said: "There is no truth to that perception."

He described himself as "just a facilitator," and said he had "never convinced" the actor to run for president.

He added that Angara had not spoken with Pro since President Joseph Estrada's ouster.

Sotto also said it was Roxanas who drafted the joint statement. He said that it was based to Pro for his approval and to himself for review, and that he made a few revisions.

### Phone call

Roxanas said he met at home when Lacson called on his mobile phone at about 11 a.m.

"He told me he heard of Mr. Fernando. For that there would be another meeting next week," Roxanas said.

He quoted Lacson as saying that Pro and the senator should "get together to meet again together with their followers, companions or lawyers" to "discuss a mutually agreed upon

(continued on A-3)

### Why Pro not at proclamation

Roxanas said Pro did not attend his Wednesday proclamation at the Hotel InterContinental in Makati because he felt that the selection process conducted by the opposition coalition was "unfair."

"Any unilateral pronouncement [by the opposition] was that it would be a mistake," he said. "He always wanted to be a candidate of unanimity," Roxanas said, adding that Pro "wanted to be a candidate of unanimity and the issue of the opposition standard-bearer was resolved.

In Malacañang, President Macapagal-Arroyo hailed the supposed unity talks between Lacson and Pro.

She said that the opposition's meeting seemed to be that we can get down to the business of thrashing out the issues of the campaign," Mr. Macapagal said in a text statement on her circuit for the presidency in 2004.

Earlier, the campaign spokesperson, Housing Secretary Mike Defensor, took potshots at the opposition between Lacson and Pro, and insisted the dismissed that the opposition would be engaged in bickering and clinching of spoils if elected.

### GMA to HK, Bahrain

"On my part, I just noticed from a fruitful trip to Japan where I worked for a better deal for our government Filipino workers and market more jobs for power and development in Mindanao," said the President, who arrived in Manila at around 8 a.m. yesterday from Tokyo, where she attended the Japan-Asean summit.

She said she would leave for Bahrain this morning "to partake of the same thrusts, and we could achieve a range of new diplomacy to reinforce our domestic policies and programs to uplift the lives of our people."

Before flying to Bahrain, the President will stop over in Hong Kong to meet with the businessmen of Filipino OFWs there, some of whom will be waiting for the last time as overseas voters.

### Drawing power

Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr., another opposition presidential aspirant, sounded that Pro would "most likely" emerge as the official standard-bearer of the opposition because of his "big drawing power."

But "comes with the front of a typhoon, if one wants to use an analogy," Pimentel said in a press statement.

But he said that while Pro could easily draw the ballots, "that only can become significant if it is used to vote a qualified person."

Pimentel also said the opposition should unite because the President was still the one to beat despite her declining public ratings.

"The incumbent in Malacañang is always the person to beat whether she is doing well or she is not doing well, because she has all the resources on hand, because she has all the machinery and machinery of the government at his disposal," the senator said. With a report from Volkar Lathop-Arellano

# Sir Mick doesn't sound right ...

(continued on A-3)

one-shocked.

Rolling Stone Keith Richards was a car distributor in Aggie—the group's official, women-may-bear-man—accepted a knighthood from Prince Charles at Buckingham Palace. Richards said Jagger's accepting the honor was a disgrace, a comment Jagger laughed off.

"I think he would probably like to get the same honor himself," Jagger told reporters.

"It's like being given an ice cream—one gets one and then all want one. It's nothing new. Both like to make a buck."

Time Magazine dropped since 1965, when some enraged dipsticks misused this gallowsdelic to protest after The Beatles were made Members of the Order of the British Empire or OBE.

Since then, ex-Beatle Paul McCartney, Beatles' producer George Martin, Elton John and Cliff Richard have become rock knights.

Two other members—Ringo Starr, Brandon of Lewy and the Postmasters, and Gary Brooker of Procol Harum—were of the pulpit. Those chip recollect MBEs for those dear by sends.

### Jagger's letters

Other than the predictably-bored criticism from Richards, the announcement last year of Jagger's honor brought only a couple of angry letters to The Daily Telegraph.

A Canadian woman whose husband, mother and grandfather received honors wrote: "By giving a knighthood to a rapist like Mick Jagger, the prime minister has denigrated all the worthy recipients of honors from Sir Elgar to the Queen."

Born Michael Philip Jagger to a London suburb, Jagger studied at the prestigious London School of Economics, where he started playing with Richards and Brian Jones.

They made their first public appearance as a jazz duo in 1962, taking the name Rolling Stones from Muddy Waters' "The Rolling Stone Blues." Ron plays Bill Wyman and drummer Charlie Watts joined later.

### 'Jungle music'

Jagger came to the ceremony with his 30-year-old fillies, Jerry—who became epic dead set his son's passion for "jungle music"—and daughter Kate, 22, and Elizabeth, 33.

He conceded little to an uncivil uniform. Instead of the more usual tailored, Jagger sported a designer suit with leather lapels and black leather sneakers. He donned that sweet regal knighthood was a reversal of his anti-establishment past, which epitomized the "sex, drugs-and-rock'n'roll" lifestyle.

"I don't think the establishment is exclusive and I'm very pleased to be here," Jagger replied in a jokey exchange with reporters. "I'm very sure "as long as you don't take it all too seriously."

Jagger suggested that he was now due for a bit more respect.

"I suppose people will call me 'Sir Mick,'" he told reporters, "but 'Sir Michael' has a nice ring to it."

### Tremendous souls

Singer Marianne Faithfull once named her year that she wasn't surprised that her old boyfriend wrapped himself "calling this a tremendous honor." She said, "We always wanted that so much, that's why I'm sort of compassionate about it."

Jagger was a shy, middle-class youth when he set up the Rolling Stones with guitarist Richards, a childhood friend from Dartford, east London, while still a student at the London School of Economics.

In 1962, Jagger and Richards hooked up with another guitarist, Brian Jones, and the three began playing gigs around the British capital, releasing their first album, "The Rolling Stones," the following year.

The Stones' early hits—almost all "I can't get no) Satisfaction" and its subsequent success led the British Music Jagger the man with the early demeanor, rubber lips and a scarecrow body, had hit the big time. He and his other Stones were international stars.

### 40-year career

The rest, as they say, is history.

"Under my Thumb," "Let's Spend the Night Together," "Sympathy for the Devil" and "Brown Sugar" are among the numerous hits which have punctuated the group's 40-year career.

While all band members have caused a lot of trick to law—Brian Jones was found dead in a swimming pool in 1969, Keith Richards was arrested for heroin possession in 1977—it is the indefatigable Jagger whom prosecutors say has always owned the beat. AP, AFP

# Defensor cites 'dream team'

By Juliet L. Javellana and Cynthia D. Balana

SHE HAS yet to pick her running mate, but President Macapagal-Arroyo's campaign spokesperson Mike Defensor is already drumming her claim to a "dream team."

Defensor claimed in a statement that there was a "bandwagon of support" for Ms Macapagal's candidacy among political leaders tilted with Senator Panfilo Lacson (Laksa-ban), as well as with other groups.

"The bandwagon is expected to become unstoppable when the campaign goes full swing," Defensor said.

He cited Pandi Primicias Mayor Edward Hagedorn and Cagayan de Oro Mayor Vicente Emano, both known supporters of the deposed Estrada, who recently pledged support to the President.

Switching sides along with Emano was another Cagayan de Oro leader, House Assistant Minority Leader Constantino Jaraula, a member of the opposition Lakas ng Demokratikong Pilipino.

A few days back, Defensor said, Leyte political kingpin Rukay Romualdez, younger brother of former First Lady Imelda Marcos, also vowed to back the administration team. Bukidnon mayors and political leaders led by Bayugan Secretary Blue Sojor followed suit, Defensor added.

He also announced that Bulacan Rep. Willie Villarama, Mr Macapagal's former chief of staff when she was vice president, had "come back to the fold" after a falling out early on in the presidency.

Defensor said Rep. Susano Enriquez, Marawi Mayor Omar Solibatu, and Cebu mayors were likewise backing the President.

As for what he called "the PGMA Dream Team" itself, Defensor was vague at best. "Those who are signing up ... are from different political spectra, which only shows that the Macapagal administration has indeed been effective in delivering government services to our people."

But apparently fearing sad Ople spokesperson's flashy net reports that the Nationalist Peoples Coalition, led by businessman Edcibole "Danding" Tolentino, is set to sign a coalition agreement with the ruling Lakas-CMD.

NPC's cunning coalition talks with Lakas in the House of Representatives was elevated with the election of superfactional Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr., which Macapagal's party had championed.

Solicitor Tere Pazolano Dy, NPC president, met last Wednesday with Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr., Lakas president, to draft the pact.

GIANT DELEN. Three children are dwarfed by two huge lighted figures of Joseph and Mary as they stand before the ark of the Infant Jesus in this Nativity scene in front of the University of the Philippines' Quezon Hall.

# 'Politics heating up early in RP'

TOKYO, Japan, via FLIP—While becoming best politics has reached the boiling point so early in Manila, President Macapagal-Arroyo Friday plunged headlong into the international campaign trail here where she was warmly received by hundreds of overseas Filipino workers despite Tokyo's freezing weather.

"Dito sa Pilipinas napakainga nawawa ng kampanya, kaya mas maaga ako kaming nasa. Eh sa Pilipinas, the campaign has heated up quite early, that's why I'm happier being here with you," Ms Macapagal said in a speech before leaders of Filipino organizations in Japan.

The President was in Japan to attend the Association Summit like she is set to visit Hong Kong and Bahrain after returning to Manila.

She is due to arrive in Hong Kong today on a lightning visit to meet Filipino contract workers in what critics say is a bid to shore up support for her election bid.

In Tokyo on Friday night, the President was mobbed by enthusiastic Filipinos wielding digital and mobile phone cameras, and handwaving, as she climbed up the steps at the Takanawa Prince Hotel.

OMA protest and coal education, and administration information sheets crowding her booking projects were laid out at the hotel entrance.

A number of people in the crowd were white t-shirts with "Stop Ghosts Kasal Pilipino Ay Ito Gusto Ko" emblazoned in red letters.

The President began her speech with greetings in several Filipino dialects and lavished praise for the OFW's cash remittances. She said the overseas Filipino "investments" helped the country achieve its highest economic growth rate in a quarter since the 1997 Asian financial crisis.

Ms Macapagal said that the OFWs in Japan numbered around 200,000, making them the third largest population of Filipino foreigners after Saudi Arabia (one million) and Malaysia (300,000). (DI C. Cabacungan Jr. with a report from AP)

# Ebdane to Berroya: Take your time

By TJ Burgonio

POLICE Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. is not rushing Chief Supt. Reynaldo Berroya over the top post in the Civil Security Group just to complete the controversial 32-star revamp in the Philippine National Police.

Berroya was the only officialto jump his rank to the rescue ordeal. So which one of other officers can move to the next rung?

"There's no deadline for General Berroya to leave his post. There's no order yet for his relief. Once this comes out, he will be relieved," said Senior Supt. Joel Goltiao, police chief information officer, in a phone interview.

He said Berroya's relief could come even after Dec. 15, when the nominations on government appointments starts, as long as it had the approval of the Commission on Elections.

Quoting Ebdane, Goltiao said Berroya will be appointed to a government agency he declined to mention if this was the Bureau of Customs, however.

Heading Berroya's departure, his reported successor, Chief Supt. Alejandro Tesoc, would continue to pursue the office of the PNP chief.

Berroya and Director Eduardo Matibano, erstwhile chief of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, were among police officials who questioned the arrest order and asked Malacañang to exempt them from it, resulting to delays in its implementation.

Matibano, however, accepted his new post as director for investigation and detective management, after a public reconciliation with Ebdane instigated by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

For his part, Chief Supt. Isaac Cardenal, erstwhile Region 4-A director, said he was accepting his new position as deputy director for operations in the National Capital Region Police Office with some reservations.

"I had second thoughts about accepting the post as deliverance to some relative officers. But if they think I'm the adversary of the position, so be it. I'm a professional and professionalism is for sweeps.

KOREAN'S'S KOREAN: Korean nationals Lee Sang Jin and Yun Ki Young were savagely slain in the Angeles City jail yesterday after they were arrested for the alleged abduction of another Korean, Ki Chool Youn, said to be their business partners. Ki's Filipino girlfriend said she knew were involved in a massive kidnaping activities. Ki was later released unharmed. (AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE)

# Militants say Corpus up to old tricks

THE MILITANT Confederation for Unity, Recognition and Advancement of Government Employees (Courage) yesterday dismissed as "nothing but the usual Red Scare tactics" allegations made by former spy chief Brig. Gen. Victor Corpus that the group had "infiltrated" the Philippine Information Agency, the government's propaganda unit.

"He's using that same old Red Scare tactic but it's falling flat," said Percie Endar, national president of Courage, in an interview. "We have addressed that's why he's just using Courage to distance the government of his."

Endar said the PIA was "not even our affiliate—although we help the employees."

In an interview Friday, Corpus, now chief of the military's Civil Relations Group, said the PIA had been "infiltrated" by members of Courage, and declared it a subversive group.

Corpus, who diplomed to the communist movement in the '70s, said this was the reason he's pushing for the reinstitution of the Internal Security Act, a measure designed by the late ex-dictator Ferdinand Marcos to channel the communist threat. Full Coverage


CURE BAD BREATH NOW!

KIDNAPPING OR COLLECTION?

# Taiwanese abduct Taiwanese

By TJ Burgonio

FOUR Taiwanese nationals were kidnapped by some compatriots in Manila on Friday night, but were released only the following morning after paying P600,000 to their abductors, officials said yesterday.

Bruce Chang and three Taiwanese associates, who were not identified, were subdued at Chang's house on Lucas Street in Pasay City before 8 a.m. on Saturday.

Col. Eraldo Ayroso, spokesperson of the National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force (NAKTAF), was quick to say this was not a kidnapping case, but one of some parties simply collecting some dues.

## Settled case

"So far as we are concerned, this is a settled case. We don't categorize this as a 'kidnapping,'" Servando said in a phone interview, adding that the P600,000 was not a ransom payment, but the amount the victims owed their captors.

The Taiwanese victims were held in Caloocan City after Chang's companions managed to escape from the armed men.

## Negotiations

Chang reportedly negotiated with their Taiwanese captors over the phone, after a few hours, to get them to settle for an P800,000 ransom for their freedom. Part of the P 6 million allegedly delivered by the ransom to Ortigas Center in Pasig City.

The victims were freed in Caloocan, Quezon City at around 9:30 a.m. on Saturday. Servando did not provide other details of the incident.

The abduction occurred five days after police started conducting "checkpoints" and mobile checkpoints on "11 main lanes" leading to Metro Manila in an effort to control the crime rate, particularly heinous crimes like kidnapping, drug trafficking and bank robberies.

To date, several suspected kidnappers and drug pushers have been apprehended at such checkpoints. Also kidnappings of their own countrymen are not uncommon to the Philippines where there is a sizable number of Taiwanese, Chinese and Japanese nationals involved in local businesses.

# Supreme Court Doctrines

# Lewd mags, stars warned

THE GOVERNMENT is poised to launch a crackdown on sexy tabloids and magazines publishing lewd pictures and photos of movie actresses showing too much skin.

"This is fair warning to publishers of obscene magazines and tabloids: Stop it before it's too late. We will not hesitate to file charges against them. Do not test the waters, as to speak," said acting Justice Secretary Jose Calida, a Senior Assistant.

Hearing the appearance of magazines and tabloids showing bold pictures of women, Calida said the government will act to allow the repeal to continue.

Calida pointed out that publishing obscene materials is punishable under the Revised Penal Code.

"I will not hesitate to order the National Bureau of Investigation to go after them. The search will start to the most corrupted of the country and we will not allow that. So, they better exercise prudence," Calida said. Philip C. Salvosa

# Lower prices for PUVs, oil firms urged

A DISTILLED representative yesterday urged the government to convince the major oil companies to sell their petroleum products to public utility vehicle (PUV) operators at discounted prices.

Rep. Risa Hontiveros-Baraquel of the Citizens' Battle Against Corruption (Cibac) based the call after Caltex Philippines raised the prices of its gasoline, kerosene and diesel products by 30 centavos per liter late Monday due to higher crude oil prices in the world market.

Lokin said the adoption by the oil companies of a discounted pricing scheme for PUVs would effectively prevent fare increases from triggering a new fare increase starting January next year.

But operators and drivers have been lobbying for a P2-fare increase to offset losses caused by fluctuating fuel prices. The present minimum fare is P8 for regular buses and P9 for air-conditioned units.

While government experts had prices to drop in January, but operators were reported by not inclined to postpone their petition for a fare increase until next year.

Oil firms like Petron Corp. and Pilipinas Shell are already offering discounted fuel to public utility jeepneys but only to selected stations.

Lokin said this should be expanded to cover all fuel outlets in the country.

"These discount outlets are scattered only in a few areas, limiting their availability to most jeepney drivers," Lokin said.

According to Lokin, the terms of fuel price hikes necessitates the need for a two-level pricing scheme that will benefit public utility vehicles in the form of cheaper fuel prices in all fuel pump stations.

Under a deregulated oil industry, Lokin said, the government can no longer impose price ceilings on petroleum products. "Thus, it has no choice but to merely persuade oil companies to adopt its pricing proposals. Cynthia D. Balana


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## THE DAILY GOSPEL

Sunday, December 14, 2003
3rd Sunday of ADVENT

1st Reading: Zep 3: 14-18

Cry out with joy, O daughter of Sion; rejoice, O people of Israel! Shout joyfully with all your heart, daughter of Jerusalem!

Yahweh has lifted your sentence and has driven your enemies away. Yahweh, the King of Israel, is with you. Do not fear any misfortune.

On that day they will say to Jerusalem: Do not be afraid nor let your hands tremble, for Yahweh your God is within you, Yahweh, mighty warrior. He will jump for joy on seeing you, for he has restored his love. He joins in with cry out with joy, as you do in the days of the feast.

I will drive away the evil I warned you about, and you will no longer be shamed.

2nd Reading: Phil 4:4-7

Rejoice in the Lord always. I say it again: rejoice and may everyone experience your gentle kind understanding bear. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything. In everything, relate in prayer and supplication together with thanksgiving, confiding your requests before God. Then the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Gospel: Lk 3: 10-18

The people asked John, "What are we to do?" And John answered, "If you have two coats, give one to the person who has none; and if you have food, do the same."

Even tax collectors came to be baptized and asked him, "Master, what must we do?" John said to them, "Collect no more than your fixed rate." People coming to soldiers asked John, "What about us? What are we to do?" And he answered, "Don't take anything by force or threaten the people by denouncing them falsely. Be content with your pay."

The people were wondering about John's identity. "Could he be the Messiah?" Then John answered them, "I baptize you with water, but the one who is coming will do much more: he will baptize you with Holy Spirit and fire. In his hand is his winnowing fan to clear his threshing floor and gather the grain into his barn. But the chaff he will burn with fire that never goes out."

With these and many other words John announced the Good News to the people.

Commentary

The vocation of John the Baptist presupposes the coming of a prophet, a precursor that prepares the way until you in question the Son of people. The prophet announces the dominion of sins and evils in the world and at the same time announces the good news of hope for the coming of God's reign. Kingdom. There are prophets, precursors and pioneers that open new roads to humanity. They are the ones helping us to prepare the advent of God. The message of salvation is found in the words of John the Baptist: "I baptize you with water, but the one who is coming will do much more; he will baptize you with Holy Spirit and fire. As for me, I am not worthy to untie his sandal." John salvation being sent to prepare the coming of Jesus. He is not Jesus. He affirms that the coming of Jesus Christ is more powerful than he is. "He must increase while I must decrease," says John. The authority and credibility of John is rooted in his humble testimony as a precursor. His power rests on the authority of God who sends him to prepare the coming of the Messiah, the bringer of true salvation.

TREKKING through the campaign trail in Las Piñas on Saturday, President Macapagal-Arroyo (third photo) does all the right things to win friends and influence voters. Some (clockwise from above) bring with the city's leanings along with them from Mandaluyong, Cainta and Laguna who swing past a road linking these areas. From left are Cavite Rep. Gilbert Remulla, Las Piñas Mayor Vicente Aguilar, Sen. Manny Villar with his wife Rep. Cynthia Villar and Bicutan Mayor Jose Cavalla. INQUIRER PHOTOS/GIL C. FLORO

# RP lands 4th in SEA Games with 48 gold medals

Front page 6-1

tourism sports director Cynthia Carreon, who represented Tourism Secretary Joel Gonzalez, during the closing ceremony last night.

### Golden doubles

Wushu chair, reality athletes Annie Tongcuan-Wilfly Wang pulled off a total double early in the day to-do improvement to close up to a couple of victories by frontrunners Edward Folayang and Dolly Anders in the athletics reporting events late Friday night at the PE Qirino. Finally, on-break Ole Bolongaita in the individual competition.

Ting, only 15 by obviously the world bread turned champion, topped his favorite event to go with an earlier win in the gymnastics.

The national dribblers won the men's basketball gold for the fifth time since 1991 in Manila by blasting Malaysia, 96-54, over at their female counterparts around ng with the bronze after losing to Singapore, 84-80.

### Boxers

A golden bonus came in the 109-series traditional bout over athlete Ma Pilipinas outrowned a Ricardo Jones with a Rose of Lisbon (77-82 seconds).

The women's table boxing team led by undefeated trial champion Lucila Peters wound up second behind Thailand. The other RP members were boxers Evangeline Sandoy, Sandra Nuevo and Verona Dave Bowers.

The women from Thailand with six golds overall, the second biggest haul for this country after the eight victories registered by the athletics squad.

### More silvers than Malaysia

Following were in the 75-kg division and dealers prevailed in the 52-kg class, boosting the 10-spiers to fourth overall before they called it a day Friday by tying the Malaysians' 41 golds but moving ahead to ranking by having more silvers (32-31).

Where Ting and Wang clobbered the following morning, the Filipinos were on their way to fourth as Malaysia ran out of runners.

The 18-year-old Paraguay, former amateur 14 world champion, clocked Phom Mayakhone of Vietnam as the Filipinos amassed 2.5 points in the final round to finish with 21 and rip the Indonesians by half a point for the gold.

But the Indons finished 1-2 in the individual category with Qiki Dwi Ardianto winning with 7.5 points and Jasmine Mujiyanto coming out Tuvo for the silver in the Solvent that clinched their dead-lock at 6-5.

### Win in 17 events

All told, the Filipinos ga- compiled in 17 events with individuals accounting for the gold- and boxing matching the four victories in wrestling, whose acting president Ned Dudnik Jr. tendered his resignation for the trial- to of his boys to grab at least five golds.

Chess and judo scored three times each, four golds were added by swimming, diving and billiards while awarding golden chalices were shooting, karate-do, cycling, archery and boxing.

Adds Evan watcher's Ting and Wang, the silver double gold medalists were given Rizal's Pope Fabulpa, Lee Tuo Cuenca in Mc- birds and wrestler Marcus Mitra and 2006 Town Ancasta and Ma- Jamaror.

### How much

The Philippine Sports Commission spent about P3.06 million for the holding of the athletics, who also benefited from the P.G. million donated by Chi Darkness commercials through a fund-raising drive by Fiver Gentlemen Strike Arrupe. Another P.111 million was spent by government for the attend of participations of the 603-strong delegation.

# San Francisco school has Tagalog program

Front page 6-1

Filipino Education Center are 30-minute circuit to the south of Market area in downtown San Francisco.

Bessie Carmichael is currently the only elementary school in the United States that has an Bilingual-Bagalog bilingual program. One of the 116 schools covered by the San Francisco Unified School District, it is also classified as a language school.

At Bessie Carmichael, newly arrived Filipino immigrant children can easily make the transition from the Philippines to the US school system.

The majority—close to 60 percent—of its students are of Filipino ancestry. Coming from, but not quite, are the Hispanic Americans at 23 percent. (There is also an English-Spanish bilingual program.)

The rest of the students are African-American, Chinese American and white (non-Hispanic).

Bessie Carmichael is predominantly a school for students whose primary language is not English. It has 12 levels—from kindergarten to the fifth grade.

### Filipino teachers

Science, math, reading and language arts are taught by Filipino teachers who are proficient both in English and Tagalog, most of the teachers have been teaching for the last 18 to 20 years.

But it was only within the last three years that the Filipino Education Center (FEC) was born out of two Bessie Carmichael, Gaudiano, it has run the bilingual program that were formerly taught at the FEC.

The facility that used to house the FEC is now devoted to after-school programs, the senior programs being the "Getting Ready" child care to provide stimulating environment for newcomers for Filipino students.

### Pinay principal

Bessie Carmichael had its very first Filipino principal assuming leadership 2003-04.

Jeffrey Barges, a fourteen unemployment graduate of the Ateneo de Manila University in Quezon City, had spent the last 23 years of his life in Cuzon back as teacher and principal of two of the largest public high schools on the island.

Barges took graduate studies in education at Stanford University in Southern California during his tenure in Guam. But coming to the US mainland on his own with his wife serving family for two was a big challenge for Barges who, despite his years of experience in Guam, was initially met with skepticism and a degree of discrimination, at once of the schools to which he applied.

### Getting people together

Barges feels that the post at Bessie Carmichael is a godsend. He sees his other life on his lap.

He thinks that new chapter in his life starting challenging times. There is still much bitterness among the parents and faculty over the introduction of the FEC in Bessie Carmichael, but there is also much excitement and hope at the prospect of a new and bigger school facility set to open next school year.

Connection is currently in full swing just across the street from where the old, somewhat dilapidated facility now stands.

Barges has job here this school year is to bring people together. Barges says. "There are many issues but I know they can be solved."

### Like his own

The tall and amiable Barges seems to be smiles on like his own.

He has been involved with the school only since July but he has gradually won the hearts of the students, faculty and parents.

He is very approachable and easily teams up to people, and they, to him.

"In spite of the problems, enjoy the day," he says, smiling. "It's not like being home so I really look forward to each day."

He is equally proud of the Filipino schools teacher. "But [despite this] (They're really different). Their dedication to the craft is most admirable."

### Like home

Indeed, a visit to the school grounds will instead one of home.

At lunch time the patrol area is filled with Asia walking for their grandchildren or siblings.

Huddled in vendors, they come drifts to the school, walking several blocks to bring their wards hot lunches. They sit on wooden benches, chatting mostly of paying for adults and pouch while talking about the latest political and those big issues from back home.

Ms. Ramboyong, a San Francisco resident for the last 10 years, has been helping her daughter and son-in-law care their two boys. Her husband works as a security guard in an office building downtown.

### Bittersweet

Yet the longing to go home remains strong in Lola Ramoyong's heart.

"Minsan na nalulungkot ako. Iniisip ng mga apo kong ko," she says of the 3,000-some km of no-home gone.

She also says she will give if there more years before she and her husband head home.

The children whose lolo cant be "bored" in the middle ages blessed than those who hardly get to see their parents, Barges says.

He relates a heart-breaking incident, when he asked a group of students who missing them. All but one of the children raised their hands. "We're the parents in this setting when they wake up, and were already asleep when their parents came home at night.

He says he was shocked to see the number of hands that shot up—almost three-fourths of the whole class.

"That's why we want them to be like a home for these children, too," Barges says.

### 'We were set up'

But Teresita Dalisha, who has a child at Bessie Carmichael, says the Filipino residents of South of Market were very hot when the FEC was integrated into the school.

"We really feel that we were set up. By the promises[,] because they want to use the building [where the FEC is located] for other purposes," says the woman's grandmother.

Dalisha says that while they are happy with the prospect of moving their children into a sparkling new building next year, the fight to save the name FEC attached to the

WHERE in the world do grandmas bring her lunches to their grandchildren? Only in the Philippines here exemplified in the photo, as is all in Bessie Carmichael Elementary School in South of Market in downtown San Francisco.

name Bessie Carmichael has been long and difficult.

### Irony

Even more painful is the irony that some teachers and parents are not at all supportive of the English-Tagalog bilingual program, she says.

Indeed, not all the Filipino residents attended bilingual classes.

Many of them are children of newly arrived immigrants who are convinced that the Tagalog language is "useless" in the United States. Discussing everything Filipino, they wish to embrace everything American.

Thankfully, a few new arrivals and old-time residents continue to believe in the system and support it.

Barges' biggest challenge for the next schoolyear is to increase the school's enrollment so that the new facility will be sustainable.

"We have a very good program and we've sound really improving," he says. Yet, she have confidence in others."

### Genuinely happy

More importantly, the children seem genuinely happy.

"We care for one-nere," Dalisha says. "It's difficult enough to live in America. South of Market is not exactly an affluent area, so we really need to watch out for each other. And on Fri. it's been working."

Dalisha hopes that the parents' unrest will instead counter the current FEC facility into a middle school with an English-Tagalog bilingual program, now that the Bessie Carmichael students are more into other leaving the fifth grade.

"Being bilingual is an advantage nowadays. It also helps the children keep their roots," she says.

Dalisha is actively involved in the Parent-Teacher Association and in the FEC's after-school programs.

"Every day after school, are being treated 60 children in the FEC and conduct both academic and non-academic programs for them," she says. "There is peer tutoring, which we have found very helpful, and a lot of cultural classes. The Christmas we are teaching them how to make parol (lanterns), which we plan to decorate the street with."

Her 11-year-old Clementine, who migrated to San Francisco with her parents and younger brother Dave years ago, the bilingual classes are her links to home.

"I still love French [in the Philippines] and we write each other," she says. Clementine and her brother speak English as if it were their native language and Tagalog like they had never left the Philippines. They mail their classmates with pc and ope and are fluent in email, spoken or using Tagalog.

### Best of 2 worlds

With their classmates they talk about downtown pop icons like Mandy Moore, but are also conversant of the magical Aerials Beyonce and Kristine Hermosa in "Kung Ikaw Ang Iibigin."

"When I was new in a bilingual class, you have the best of both worlds," says Barges.

How true. Being in on a fifth grade bilingual class and hearing the duck-boiled students sing "Ako ay Pilipino" against the backdrop of an American flag, one feels the heart swell with pride.

Hopefully, these students will always carry the best of their heritage to their homes wherever life in America may take them.

# The WORLD

Ayie Lorenz B. Sarao

# Specter of failure hangs over EU charter summit

BRUSSELS—European leaders were resuming behind-closed-doors wrangling Saturday amused at finalizing a deal on a historic EU constitution, with high stakes brinkmanship threatening to descend into outright fiasco.

As fierce bickering intensified over the issue of voting rights, the glamorous capital hosted a two-day summit of 25 premiers and heads of state.

But hopes that said a "miracle" is needed to get an agreement at the Brussels summit, ran on Friday, raised the prospect of leaving the issue to Ireland to sort out when it assumes the EU's presidency from Italy on Jan. 1.

But others have said divine intervention would be superfluous if the current Irish leader had given his constitutional talks more direction, rather than putting ideas out of the fray at the last minute.

"We haven't got ingredients. And I'm very skeptical about the possibility of getting an agreement on a text," Luxembourg Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker said.

At stake is a landmark treaty designed to put the EU's creaking institutions in shape for the bloc's biggest enlargement yet, with 10 states scheduled due to join on May 1.

Spain and the biggest of the 15 newcomers, Poland, were taking the summit down to the wire by refusing to cede power on voting rights they secured in the EU's 2000 Nice Treaty.

Their demands are in stark contrast to other EU members supposed to be supplanted by the new constitution, which was drafted over a period of 17 months by a convention chaired by former French president Valery Giscard d'Estaing.

The convention text proposes many sensible innovations that have won general support, including an elected president and foreign minister to give the EU a much higher profile on the world stage.

But it has run into trouble by supporting the European Commission for increased duties in 15 voting matters other the enlargement, requiring smaller countries which see the EU's executive branch as a guarantor of their interests.

That new appears to have been shelved with the Italians indicating that each EU member state will continue to be represented by Brussels, at least for a transitional phase.

Some form of compromise wording is also expected on a matter concerning Catholic EU members—whether the constitution's preamble should make an explicit reference to Europe's Christian heritage.

Where there is no agreement yet, and no sign of an agreement, is on the question of voting rights.

The convention text proposes to scrap the EU's qualified majority voting system, which assigns a different number of votes to each country based loosely on the size of its population.

AFP

ALIYEV

## Ex-Azerbaijan president Aliyev dies in US at 80

CHICAGO/BAKU—Former Azeri President Heydar Aliyev, a wily KGB boss who came to dominate politics in his country's oil-rich region for three decades, died on Friday, just months after handing over power to his son Ilham.

Press, his hospital bed, Aliyev, 80, exhausted the dynastic succession in October elections announced by the opposition as rigged but which reassured investors seeking continuity in the predominantly Muslim former Soviet republic.

The United States and Russia, the major powers with interests in the region, accepted the poll as legitimate.

Earlier this month, US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said ties between Washington and Azerbaijan would continue to grow.

Aliyev, who had a history of poor health and collapsed during a speech in April, died in a US clinic in Cleveland, Ohio, where he went in August for treatment for congestive heart failure and kidney problems.

The death of Aliyev, who embraced the Western market economy and Islamic religion, and broke with his earlier communist years, is unlikely to affect the political situation in Azerbaijan for he has pledged to uphold his policies.

In Baku, independent ANS TV station reported that Ilham had returned to the Azeri capital from a US information technology conference in Geneva and was receiving ministers at the airport.

Critics said Aliyev stifled dissent and created a personality cult with ubiquitous portraits and slogans. Admirers credited him with bringing stability to the troubled Central Asian state like played cards off against one another.

The man dubbed "baba" (grandfather) by many Azeris got his start in the notorious Soviet KGB security police. After an alleged coup and assassination plots in 1990 and 1991, his position became unassailable.

Stability in Azerbaijan is important to global oil giants, such as BP which have invested heavily in the country. In addition, the United States sees Azerbaijan as a potential alternative source of oil to the Gulf region.

The US most department issued a statement offering its "deepest sympathy" to Aliyev's family and the government and people of Azerbaijan on his death.

Reuters

# Halliburton must refund excess billings, says Bush

WASHINGTON—U.S. President George W. Bush has said he thinks Vice President Dick Cheney's old company, Halliburton, overcharged for work it did in Iraq and that Americans have the right to refund the money.

"If there is an overcharge, like we think there is, we expect that money to be repaid," Bush said Friday amid changes by Pentagon officials that a Halliburton subsidiary charged $61 million more than it should have for gasoline.

Bush spoke after US defense department officials said Thursday that an audit unearthed evidence of irregularities in contracts held by the Halliburton subsidiary, Kellogg, Brown and Root. The company has denied any overcharging.

"I appreciate the Pentagon looking out after the taxpayers' money," said Bush. "They felt like there was an overcharge issue. They put the issue right out there on the table for everybody to see and they're doing good work."

The subsidiary was awarded two contracts in November, a Pentagon source said. $7 billion to restore Iraqi oil facilities, and $6.4 billion to provide logistical support for US troops in the Middle East and Central Asia.

Irregularities were found "in both contracts," the source said.

Another official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the gasoline prices charged were based on those the Iraqi people pay. Kuwaiti administration. "I don't think it's a systematic problem of overcharging," the official said.

The Pentagon's probe into the matter "will let the facts out for everybody to see," Bush promised. "We're going to make sure that as we spend the money in Iraq, that it is spent well and spent wisely."

But the flap over Halliburton, which Cheney ran until he joined Bush on the 2000 Republican ticket, embarrassed the United States at a time when it faces criticism from traditional friends over the war in Iraq. It has complicated the $20 billion contracts would soon total $10 billion.

The Pentagon announced earlier this week that firms from countries that opposed the US-led invasion last March—including Canada, France, Germany and Russia—could only seek low-level subcontracts.

The announcement angered the outraged countries over as Bush's special envoy, former secretary of state James Baker, heads to Europe next week to seek help in reducing Iraq's crippling debt, estimated at some $120 billion.

Before a Congress Bush family investigators, James Moseley on a swing that will take him to France, Germany, Italy, Russia and Britain before reporting back to White House.

Bush spokesperson Scott McClellan denied that the Pentagon's announcement was timed to give Baker leverage in talks on the debt, saying: "I wouldn't look at it in that way at all."

White House officials, speaking on condition they not be named, denied that questions about Halliburton would have any impact on the negotiations.

KBR has hit back strongly at what it called "shoot-to-kill media reports."

It said in a statement that the Defense Contract Audit Agency (DCAA) was "conducting a routine audit and has requested additional information from KBR.

"These have been an routine close-out and this is a normal part of the audit process for the DCAA to raise questions and request additional information.

"We are simply providing additional documentation that the DCAA needs and has confidence our employees will fulfill the DCAA."

The statement said "it would not be appropriate to discuss the operation of the questions could our conversations with DCAA are complete." AFP

MISS UNIVERSE IN SILK
Miss Universe Amelia Vega shows off a Thai silk outfit during a charity fashion show in Bangkok, Dec. 13. Vega, who is a wedding and in Thailand, participated in a fashion show that featured gowns and scarves Her Majesty the Queen's Thai Silk Foundation. AP

# UK tourist stuck in Australian desert dies

SYDNEY—A British tourist has died after walking 40 km in search of help for his baby after his car got stuck in the Australian desert, police said Saturday.

Thomas Henry Ryles, 33, from London, died Friday at the Pannikin aboriginal Community after being sent in search Workers there spoke soon. He had been found alive, slipping in and out of consciousness, about 20 km away from the township.

Sgt. Mike Gough said police can had been discovered by two motorists a day earlier after a baby became trapped, about 60 km east of the Western settlement in the Tanami region of northern Western Australia.

Aboriginal trackers were employed to search for Ryles, but a spokesman stopped Chris from finding him on Thursday He was found early Friday morning, Gough said.

"Temperatures were in the mid-40s degrees Celsius (around 104.00 Fahrenheit)," Gough said. "We have many road deaths you have a survival estimate of less than two days in those parts."

Constable Cindy Morgan from nearby Mobile Bar police said Ryles was attempting to drive thousands of kilometers across the dry rugged Outback to meet his friends.

Morgan said he was ill-prepared for such a hazardous journey, having failed to take the proper emergency equipment and with a limited water supply.

"The unfortunate thing was he didn't have a satellite phone or emergency beacon and I guess it's a timely reminder to the people know when you are in a remote, dry area or in the outback ... that you must get prepared," Morgan told Australian Broadcasting Corp. radio. AP

# Deaths, barricades in Haiti's worst unrest in years

PORT-AU-PRINCE—Thousands of Haitians burned tires and erected barricades Friday in rallies Jan said against President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, in which at least four people have died in two days of unrest.

One person died in the capital when gunfire rang out from a passing vehicle. Clouds of smoke rose over roads blocked by flaming tires. Stones injured several people, witnesses said.

Three people died Thursday when demonstrators clashed with police and armed opponents of Aristide in the central town of Gonaives, a local journalist said. Reuters reports have been killed and 71 injured in clashes in Gonaives since Sept. 11.

More than 1,000 supporters of Aristide marched into a river of supporters in the capital, while another rally of several thousand, mostly students, demanded the dismissal of Aristide.

Aristide took office in 2001 and was due to serve through 2006. But political tensions have been escalating for months.

Aristide supporters broke into and ransacked police stations in several towns. But on Friday, leading their victories with weapons and heading back to their neighborhoods in the north of the capital, according to several official radio stations. AFP

# Fading Afghan security may force UN withdrawal

[illegible]—already forced out of Iraq by suicide bombers, the United Nations may have to abandon its two-year effort to stabilize Afghanistan because of rising violence blamed on the Taliban, its top official here warned in an interview with The Associated Press.

Lakhdar Brahimi said his team could not continue its work in the area ravaged nation unless security improves and called for more foreign troops to halt attacks that have killed at least 11 aid workers across the south and east since March.

"Unless the West are committed to supporting Afghanistan ensure fair [illegible] and ensure given opportunity to its work in some public security] conditions," Brahimi said Friday.

"They seem to think that our presence is important here. Well, if they do, they have got to make sure that the conditions for us to be here are there," he said. "If not, we could pack up."

The world body pulled its foreign staff out of vast areas of the country in October after the death of Britton Bonded, a 29-year-old French refugee worker assassinated in the northern city of Ghazni. It also suspended some operations in regions bordering Pakistan, where Taliban militants and their allies have been most active.

The pullback followed a similar drawn down in Iraq, where an August truck bomb that killed 23 people at the UN headquarters in Baghdad sparked the withdrawal of international [illegible].

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said Friday that Iraq would be too dangerous. Most UN functions in Iraq are to operate from a core regional base in Mosul, Cyprus, with local staff working off the gap.

UN calls for international troops to [illegible] across Afghanistan's troubled provinces grew shrill after Zealand became the first international UN worker killed here since the fall of the Taliban in late 2001.

Mrs. which [illegible] a 5,500-strong peacekeeping force in the capital, Kabul, has agreed to principle to expand into the provinces. But nations have been slow to come by, and with pledges of troops. AP

LUCIA DAY

Swedish children dressed as Santa Lucia, Santa Claus and the traditional tomte hold up ginger cookies during Lucia Day in a Stockholm kindergarten Dec. 12. Lucia is traditionally celebrated in Sweden Dec. 13, a day when Lucia and her lighted wreath appear among many others from each of the kindergartens, where with songs, coffee and especial cakes formal they spread a happy atmosphere. AP

# Bush signs Syria sanctions measure

WASHINGTON — [illegible] President George W. Bush signed legislation Friday that aims to punish Syria for alleged ties to terrorists, new support for insurgents in Iraq, and efforts to obtain weapons of mass destruction.

"Today, I have signed into law HR 1828, the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2003," Bush said in a statement released by the White House.

The bill demands that Syria end support for terrorism, halt the development of chemical and biological arms as well as medium- and long-range missiles, and withdraw the roughly 20,000 troops it has deployed in Lebanon.

It also calls on the governments of Lebanon and Syria to negotiate "mutually satisfactory arrangements" with Israel in order to secure "a full and permanent peace."

And it says Syria must cease its support to any military equipment and assist U.S. militants bound for Iraq, where US-led forces have nearly crushed deadly attacks resisting Saddam Hussein's regime.

The legislation also ends the president to prohibit US exports to Syria of weaponry and so-called "dual-use" technology with both civilian and military applications and to pick out from a range of sanctions.

They include restricting US exports and business investments, downgrading US-Syrian diplomatic ties, imposing travel restrictions on Syrian diplomats at the United States, and restricting aeroflight rights for Syrian aircraft inside US airspace.

Bush's statement included vaulted-out language unchanging he construed the law's requirements as tools, not directives limiting the White House's executive prerogatives in drawing foreign policy.

"My approval of the act does not constitute my adoption of the various statements of policy in the Act or [illegible] policy," Bush added.

The measure cleared both chambers of the US Congress by overwhelming margins, and Bush cooled two years of united opposition to the measure in early October after lawmakers granted him the power to waive the sanctions. AFP


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# Canada's Martin names 20 new faces in Cabinet

OTTAWA — Freshly inaugurated Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin has shed ground on many PMOs, announcing naming a Cabinet with 20 new faces and dumping some long-time party hatchets on the way.

Admitting his program was ambitious, Martin vowed to clean up the government's image—after a series of scandals surrounded several former ministers, impotent relations with the United States and malaise in right Ottawa politics.

In a press conference, Martin darkly acknowledged a question on whether he will call a general election. Most insiders, including members of Martin's own team, believe the new election will be held in April or May.

Four given Martin lost from or five months to make his own mark politically as he heads his party to what he hopes will be an unprecedented fourth consecutive election victory.

Martin's team was closely phased on the new Cabinet.

With 308 members, it is the largest in Canadian history. Twenty of those ministers are new to the Cabinet, and many of the 18 holdovers found themselves with different portfolios.

Three of the fresh faces picked by Foreign Minister Bill Graham, who was known to be former Hunt campaign prime minister Jean Chrétien to work closely with Washington on major international issues.

Washington was obviously a major factor in many of Martin's selections.

The new Deputy Prime Ministers is Anne McLellan who, as Martin's right-hand leader cabinet, will have responsibility for homeland security and for negotiating with the administration any matters of North American collaborative security.

Martin has also appointed a high-profile politician, David Berson, as his own parliamentary secretary with the single job of looking after Canada-US relations.

Berson joined Martin's Liberal Party last week, key steps on which he will take responsibility for the leadership of the opposition Progressive Conservative Party.

But, so far, there are no plans for Martin to visit Washington or the US President George W. Bush to visit Ottawa.

Martin said Friday that the new team will have a telephone conversation on Monday and would move next month on the sidelines of a summit of the Americas in Mexico.

But the message Martin is already sending to Bush is positive.

The new defense minister is David Pratt, who at chair of the House of Commons defense committee earlier this year, publicly called on Ottawa to join Bush's "coalition of the willing" to attack Iraq.

As far as defense is concerned, Martin's new emphasis at his first formal press conference, although he said Ottawa's role in Afghanistan would not change, was to boost the size of the country's military forces.

The extended war triggered last month by rumors alleging that Montgomery's election.

Peru is a predominantly Catholic country where homosexuality is frowned upon.

Montoya, who has no approval rating of between 60 percent and 95 percent, responded by telling reporters that the sex videos of a more campaign orchestrated by a former prime minister and now a leading opponent, Luis Gobet.

He insisted that the secret videotapes, launched "by dark forces", were aimed at thwarting needed economic reforms that she had proposed.

Montoya is seen as a possible presidential candidate for the 2006 election. AFP

# Another GI dies from Iraq booby trap

BAGHDAD — Another US soldier has been killed and two more wounded by an improvised explosive device or booby-trapped bomb in the Sunni Muslim heartland west of Baghdad, a military spokesperson said Saturday.

A convoy from the 82nd Airborne Division was hit by the devastating weapon of this sort combine forces on Friday, said Ramadi, where also a suicide bomber blew up a truck at the Task Force's headquarters on the edge of the town, killing one and wounding 16.

"At approximately 6:30 a.m. yesterday (Friday) Task Force All American was involved with IED (improvised explosive device) attack," [illegible] said of the capital.

"Three soldiers were wounded. They were medevaced to the 28th Combat Hospital in Baghdad where one soldier died." Intel in the day the spokesperson said.

The death brought to 297 the number of US soldiers who have died in Iraq since President George W. Bush declared major combat over on May 1. More than 2,200 US troops have also been wounded since the same period.

A IED wounded two British soldiers per Friday in a coalition convoy south of the Iraqi capital, a military spokesperson said. AFP

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Inquirer


# Peru president demands ministers' resignations

LIMA — Peruvian President Alejandro Toledo demanded late Friday the resignation of his entire government in an obvious attempt to defuse a politically damaging sex scandal involving Peruvian Ministers Beatriz Merino.

The move came as opinion polls showed the president's popularity rating plunged to a new low of only 13 percent.

"In line with rights granted to him by the constitution, Toledo that accepted the cabinet asked today for the resignation of the chief of the Council of Ministers as well as all the members of the cabinet," read a communique issued by the presidential palace.

It said a new cabinet would be announced when Merino returns on Monday from a trip to the United States.

Toledo also asked for the resignation of all of his advisers, many of whom have been heavily criticized in the latest media and press by members of his own party, Peru Posible.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
Sunday SPORTS



Editor Roderick S. Pilapandan
Assistant Editor Edwin M. Villanueva

5-GAME SWEEP

# RP dribblers stretch SEAG reign

By Roy Luarca

HO CHI MINH—The Philippines faced its true strength and routed Malaysia, 90-61, Saturday to stretch its reign in Southeast Asian Games men's basketball competition to five.

Hunting their first title since the 1991 Manila edition, the Filipinos led by as many as 32 points (74-42) en route to the win that gave them a five-game sweep at the Military Region Six Stadium.

It was a sudden turnaround from their scrambling victory over the hosts Thursday night.

"I told the boys to give Friday's game to Filipinos so they can watch us [some who play league] do not want to go back to our country as losers. They didn't let me [down]," said RP Coleagues Guadiller coach Aric del Rosario, who was very upset during the post-game interviews.

Countering their step since the Thais Vietnamese, Filipinos used the win over the hosts. Indonesia, the Filipinos were virtual champions even before the opening tip-off as the Malaysians need a clear victory by 4 points to wrest the crown.

So was would the Filipinos, champions since the 1991 Manila edition, allow that.

Setting the tempo right at the start, the Filipinos, behind the low hands of James Yap, posted a 20-4 lead from which the wanted Malaysians could not recover.

"My players looked like kids playing against men. Your crown is definitely the best in Southeast Asia," said Malaysian coach Azmi bin Mohd Yusof.

The 6-foot-3 Yap, the Philippines' most prolific gunner, wound up with 22 points, including three triples.

Philippine Basketball League MVP Gary David and Colegiate Athlete 13 each while Renald de Ocampo and Dennis Espino, recovered from a groin injury, chipped in 12 and 11 respectively.

Doing his body bruise, the 6-foot-3 De Ocampo combined with 6-6 Jose Mari Pingris and Fire-Gene UAAP MVP Rich Alvarez of the Ateneo Blue Eagles to rule the boards, 70-39.

Surprising the Filipinos with a full-court press, the Malaysians controlled 16 straight points on a lone-smooth spin to close to within 74-58, a lead still 5-42 left in the third quarter.

Not wanting a repeat of the Indonesia loss, Del Rosario used his time-out and reminded Yap to keep it.

When play resumed, Yap breezed in straight unmarked drive and Cruz flicked a triple to seal the outcome, 83-53.

The Philippines clinched its 23rd basketball gold in the biennial event, having only in the 1977 and 1989 editions.

Del Rosario said the boys' coaches [some who play league] were expected to [some] leave together as a team by early next week before flying to their [some] many nations of representation.

Team manager Jose Raul Lladlles, who witnessed his [some] to keep the team's position as [some] to the 2005 Manila SEAG, said the guys deserved [some] win some back. Now a hard game and [some] good.

"All we can do now is congratulate them [players] to stay with the national team. We've offered them a [some] incentive and [some] the bills are now on their hands," said Lladlles, who was awarded by Team Fourteen to attending to Del Rosario's needs.

Team Zamar and Rey Magsino rubbed the crown Day helped win for the 43-year-old Del Rosario, who coached Gal Glen to 12. They were SEAG champion coached themselves, with Glen winning in 1991 in Manila's league and Magsino topping the 1997 Jakarta edition.

Robbed by the poor footplow shooting, the Filipinos yielded to the Singaporeans, 44-40, earlier, duplicating their feat in Kuala Lumpur.

Coach Ric Gregorio's charges proved they've been right to be in the hot box session in Cebu with a 3-0 record after women's division swept by the Malaysians. The Singaporeans handed [some] [some].

Scores:

Men

RP 90—Yap 22, David 13, Cruz 12, De Ocampo 12, Pingris 11, Pingris 4, Lebang 4, Brand 4, Brenson 3, Cruz 2, Sangren 1, Subsegment).

Malaysia 61—Ng 16, Subramaniam 12, Ong 8, Ang 6, Lim 5, Ong 3, Rosario 3, Chan 2, Wong 2, Tan Wh 2, Tan Chi 2, Singh 0

Quarters: 20-4, 42-26, 74-58, 90-61.

Women

Singapore 68—Chua 16, Ong 14, Cheng 7, Tan 5, Chua 5, Chew 4, Leong 3, Ee 0.

RP 58—Alvarez 15, Narvasa 8, Nicolas 8, Quilban 6, Bautista 6, Vega 2, Lorenzo 2, Pacheco 2, Crisostomo 0.

Quarters: 9-10, 32-18, 50-36, 68-58.

| | Q | S | B | T |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Vietnam | 108 | 97 | 91 | 306 |
| Thailand | 90 | 85 | 96 | 261 |
| Indonesia | 33 | 88 | 96 | 227 |
| Philippines | 46 | 54 | 79 | 177 |
| Malaysia | 44 | 42 | 39 | 145 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Singapore | 39 | 33 | 30 | 112 |
| Myanmar | 46 | 43 | 50 | 139 |
| Laos | 1 | 5 | 15 | 21 |
| Cambodia | 1 | 6 | 11 | 17 |
| Brunei | 1 | 1 | 4 | 10 |
| East Timor | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

RP playmaker Cruz (left) tries to snatch the ball from a driving Philippine rival. [illegible]

# Paragua delivers clincher as men's squad prevails

By Ray Learoa

HOCKEBIRD—Hil Mark Paragua delivered the clincher Saturday as the Philippine men's team added the standard chess gold to its medal collection in the 22nd Southeast Asian Games here.

Paragua beat Vietnamese IM Pham Minh Hoang in the ninth and final round, where his opponent settled for draws, to hand the Filipinos a scary 23-22.5 victory over the Indons in the day-long ball.

Grandmaster Eugene Torre secured up with the bronze medal in individual play where Indons GM Utut Adianto and Joanne Mogniotes landed first and second.

For a while, Torre had a chance for the title as Adianto and top-seeded Vietnamese GM Dao Thien Hai were locked in a tight battle in Board 1.

When Adianto won his an unmarkable 75 points, Torre grudgingly agreed to split the point with Singapore GM Wu Kao Hui and finish with 6.5 points. Megaputeras also posted the same total, but was awarded the silver after the Buchholz tiebreak was applied.

The 19-year-old Paragua ended up with 6 points, GM Rong Villamayor, who drew Vietnamese Nguyen Anh Dung, added 5.5, while IM Ronald Dalo and Fidel Corpuz Jr. following a draw with Thai Suchart Chaiyoth. GM Jaya Antonius also had 5 after a draw with Malaysian Lee Sze Wang, but he did not count due to a lower Buchholz.

It was the Philippines' third gold in the event held in the biennial meet for the first time.

# Late wushu gold binge boosts RP

By Ernesto Gonzalez

HANOI—In a span of 12 hours, wushu artists Arvin Ting and Wilfi Wong pulled off golden doubles that sent the Philippines from fifth to fourth overall for good in the 22nd Southeast Asian Games Saturday.

The two teenagers, who came up with wushu's first two gold Thursday, returned to the arena Saturday morning to complete the victory double that solidified the Filipinos' status as No. 4 in the standings.

The 15-year-old Ting, showing why he's the world broadsword champion, topped his favorite event with 9.55 points after rolling the gymkhana on Friday.

Wong, 19, added the sword title to his earlier gold in the cudgel category by seeing out Vietnam's Nguyen Hoan Trung, 9.26-9.23.

As Thailand was departing four Vietnam of its most coveted triumph with a 1-1 win in football, Edward Palaypay and Cindy Andrew delivered in the another tipsetting events late Friday night.

Palaypay, Sea Thai Philathleticsmanmen, 2-0, in the men's 70-kg event while Andrew edged Vietnam's Ngo Thi Ha, 1-0, in the women's 52-kg final.

With the two victories, the Filipinos and the Malaysians' 65 gold output and officially moved up to fourth with more silvers, 52-41, going into the final day of the competitions.

Team manager Francis Chua, lifetime honorary president of Philippine wushu, said the Filipinos could have won more if not for the hometown advantage Vietnam capitalized to the hilt.

The hosts wound up with a hauling haul of 33 golds although the second-meeting die victories of the Filipinos surprised by two their initial efforts in Malaysia last years ago.

The Filipinos also captured four silver medals, including a heartbreaking defeat by Rene Catalan in the men's meteless 60-kg final.

THAILAND'S Prasarn Pongpaeng (11) kicks the ball toward Malaysia's Mohd Puzee during the men's regu-squad take-me final at the 22nd Southeast Asian Games in Hanoi Saturday. Thailand defeated Malaysia, 2-1, 11, 21-16, to win the gold. (AFP)

CONGRATULATIONS
Team Philippines!
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OFFICIAL EQUIPMENT

# Heroes' welcome, cash incentives await athletes

By Marc Anthony Reyes

A HERO'S welcome is prepared for the team bulk of the Philippine delegation who are set to arrive today after competing in the just-concluded Vietnam Southeast Asian Games.

The athletes, who have historically surpassed the country's performance two years ago in Kuala Lumpur, are also expected to receive a windfall of cash incentives through the Philippine Sportscise Act.

The law, signed only last year, entitles each gold medalist to a P500,000 reward, while winners of silver and bronze get P250,000 and P200,000, each respectively.

In the end of the Games, the country amassed 46 golds, 54 silvers and 75 bronzes, leaving the in dismal 31-40-47 tally in Malaysia two years ago.

Still, the 500-strong RP contingent, the biggest ever abroad in the past three editions, fell short of the third-place finish the Philippine Sports Commission earlier predicted as the country placed fourth in the final standings.

The 15-gold increase in the tally is also a reflection of the limited opportunities of events the Philippines took part in compared to the 81.

The country competed in 20 sports since, plans in an attempt to send as many athletes as possible in preparation for the 2005 SEAG which the country will be hosting.

As expected, weak and field missed up as the biggest winner with eight golds to three, followed by wushu with six and taekwondo with five winners.

"We are already very happy with the performance because we know for sure that with the onslaught of Vietnam, everybody will just be scrambling for crumbs," said Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose Romasanta.

# GMA lauds delegation

MANILA—President Macapagal Arroyo yesterday congratulated the Philippine delegation even before it could return home from the 22nd Southeast Asian Games where it retained fourth place overall and hit its target in terms of gold medals won.

"The President as well as First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo are very happy about the result of the SEA Games," said Eric Buhain, chair of the Philippine Sports Commission.

"They [Filipino athletes] made us proud of them and they made Filipinos stand tall," Buhain quoted the President as saying.

Senator Edgardo Angara has already endorsed the Philippine athletes' performance in the SEA Games and in fact, cheered the team to go all out for its modest goal of finishing fourth and bagging around 40 gold medals.

Buhain lauded both Gloria Presidential and the First Gentleman for being hands on with Philippine sports.

## SPORTSWATCH

### NCA derby resumes tomorrow

THE "NCA 1-Cock Derby" derby series resumes on Monday and Wednesday, at the air-conditioned Araneta Coliseum, with more than 90 quality fights lined up. Hosts are partners Dual Resident, Al Bhagsingay, Ino Nieves, Edgar Santos and Mayor Mel Palomia. Substitution of weights is today, from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Araneta Coliseum grass gate. For inquiries, contact 911-1481 and 911-1908. This month-ended "World Slasher Cup 2003-3 Cock International Derby" is set for Jan. 18, 25 and 25 with Big Dome owner Nena de Jesus, Wally Dimas, Sen. Ito Viares, Rene Medina and Pico Pavia as co-hosts. For other details, contact 911-1481 and 911-1908.

### Car clubs hold 1st national games

METRO MANILA is one different car clubs in the country will vie for different prizes in the 1st National Inter-Car Club Games at the Shoots na Bento complex in Nasa Boulevard, Pasay City today. At least seven car clubs have confirmed participation in the Paintball Adventure and Karting Cohen's, both sponsored by Petron. They include the Portage Cars Club, Mercedes-Benz Club, Volkswagen Club, MiniCooper Club, Everyday Holiday Car Club, and Club Bilbao. Five participants from each club will compete in the paintball shooting event while a contestant of the set will be allowed in the karting race.

### Konka top seed in semifinals

DEFENDING champion Konka Pandas handed 4SM Cooling Coils its first loss, 69-58, to emerge top seed entering the crossover semifinal phase of the GOBS Inter-Barangay basketball tournament at the GOBS gym. Coming from a 0-1 (3-defeat against Congo Grills, Konka posted a 37-30 lead at the second and banked on Jimmy Antonio shots of 7 points Tia to thwart the Cooling Coils. Tia topscored with 25 points while Lim Yu-Liang and Mark Lim dropped in 11 and 12, respectively. Konka meets fourth-seeded Bonsai's in the semifinals with the winner facing either 4SM or TRL in the championship. The tournament is sponsored by Del Rio Rambo, Unipac, 4SM Cooling Coil and Sino Spa and Fitness Center.

### Fisforems 10-round fight on RPN-9

MANILA'S Fisforems today matches an exciting 10-rounder in the bantamweight division as Rodel Mayor battles Ramon Tsukiyama in a fight held mainly at the state-of-art Live Cordoba Boxing Arena in Rizalian, Taguig. The show is aired mainly in the United States. Journals, Japan and the Middle East through ABS-CBN's Pinoy Central. "It Commemorates our 1st Person, Quinito Henson and Tony Tabuena. Now on it's second year. It started at 3 a.m., Sundays, on RPN 9. Chief brokers is Samsung Electronics Phils. Exec. Gail Power follows the boxing program at 5 p.m.

# Making Manny mature

SPECTATOR

*Al S. Mercadejas*

THE HARDEST part in a boxer's life is facing the specter of defeat. When he loses, a part of him dies. When he cares every bout as its every waste, goes on battle knowing with confidence. If defeat happens, he suffers more except pain. If he loses by the so-called skin of his teeth, sleepless nights could set in. The suffering he isn't made of sterner stuff, insanity could set in. I've seen boxers being unable to cope with defeat. One of them is Rolando Bautista. But that is another story.

It is the same with many sports officials handling boxers.

One such guy is Manny Lopez, the president of the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines. For many years now, Manny has become quite saffered in defeat. He is a bit frostbitten. He seems virtually numbed by it already.

"I seem not to know anymore how to react to defeat," Manny Lopez tells me, a day after serving beats Ho Chi Minh on Thursday. "I've done everything I could, and here I am again, coming home a beaten man."

He has seen victory slip by him in the 2000 Sydney Olympics, and suffered the ignominy of getting gold-less in the 2001 SEA Games in Kuala Lumpur.

This year, Manny Lopez, seeing that six of his boxers had marched to the finals, felt it's emphasis and smelled victory even before his fist went could climb up the ring.

Alas, only one struck gold: Rizzy Tabanera, a light flyweight.

And Manny Lopez was even being blamed for the scary, gloomy sight of the crowd pelting the ring with plastic bottles and other debris in protest over a decision declaring a Filipino loser to his Thai opponent.

"I felt again, but the saddest part was that I was being blamed for the riot that ensued after our boy Bruce (Flowerio) lost what looked like a won fight," Manny says. "It was a double whammy."

Alvin Chowdry, the powerful president of Alba Thirtyfive-nineteen Boxing Limited Inc. is being blamed by Lopez of instigating the debacle, throwing incident on Thursday. Manny spotted Chowdry as telling Manny, "When you stood up in boxers, that was the signal for the crowd to riot."

What a stupid accusation, to say the least.

"How in conscience could I have possibly done that when the pitching had already begun before I stood up?" said Manny. "The evidence is there. Ask the referee, the timekeeper, the judges. Their anger was spontaneous. The truth was, I stood up to get to Paul Chowdry and protect him from harm. Ako pa ang napagbintangan."

Tsss. That's why even Filipinos in the crowd had to use the hand talk who readily expressed their anger over the new deal that Pervet got from the judges," said Manny.

Judge have arrested two businessmen spectators caught throwing debris, some allegedly Chowdry.

For the record, the Philippines finished 1-3-1. (gold-silver-bronze). He were 6-2-1 in 2001 in Kuala Lumpur.

Of the night. That boxers who barged into the finals, seven-seven, but easily, judging by the reaction from the Vietnamese crowd, three of the seven That winners could have lost to Perez, previously Junelito Magbanua and Ronel Serwaggie. Three of the seven talk sure, hosting, the division of sports, has wanted to so-called rig by local agents in Vietnam in the form of bused, it's not fixed, officiating.

"Anyway, I remember the rare clichéd," said Manny, exhibiting once more his patented diplomacy stance when confronted with debacles such as the one in Ho Chi Minh. "We have to continue working. The Olympics next year will be our next target. We have the Olympic qualifying in January in Bahrain and already, 150 boxers from the region have signed up for it. Our boxers are ready."

The other two events to pick boxers from Asia for the 40-less Games next year are also set for next year in China and Pakistan.

"Despite this sorry incident since snow, I'm not stopping," said Manny, so-registered in boxing that his brother, the re-elected governor Alex, calls Manny "a phi-land-legion."

"We haven't done anything for the last 15 years or so, except to chase that dream...so win the country's gold medal in the Olympics," Alex Lopez said of his elder brother.

Maybe, if only to make the matter on record—and assuage the feelings of Manny Lopez—Olympic president Cito Dayrit should submit an incident report to the International Olympic Committee regarding the riot that marred the flyer fight. Such report should be signed by Frank Rivaldo, the Filipino IOC representative of the Philippines.

It's a small move but isn't it said that a journey of a thousand miles starts with the first step?

TOP FINISHERS. Shown are the Pinoys Bullys Filipino Top 3 finishers (from left) 2nd runner-up Ding Ibarlosa and Ramon Santiago, 1st overall Art Guevarra and twin blasts of Team Ubron and 3rd runner-up Ricky Santiago and Dindo de Jesus of SM Bacoor.

WINNING TEAM. Members of the Far Eastern University men's duplex the given Sportshouse gift certificates representing the P50,000 worth of sports equipment they won as champion of the 2003 Philippine Badminton Tournaments (PBT) Interuniversity Cup in the Olympic Badminton Center. Also shown are Philippine Badminton Association vice president Sen. Edgardo Aglipay and PBT project director Wenn Lim.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

# OPINION

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## Blaming the victim

A jet crashed in Turkey yesterday, Robert Avensjaide's "140 Days of Terror" is truly terrifying. Not because it paints a harrowing portrait of the Abu Sayyaf hostage experience, but because a grotesque mirror lies at the center of it: Avensjaide himself. The reader's naive acquiescence is of an inescapably small being, full of vanity about his place in the scheme of things, empty of the faintest sympathy for the victims he professes to serve.

**EDITORIAL**

There is plenty of posturing in "140 Days,"—in the sense that it, Augustine's Confessions is a profession of his (faith) experience. But where the saint's autobiography is informed by his own deep sense of sin, Avensjaide's is marked by a sense that the world, and everyone in it, has failed him—including his friend, President Joseph Estrada.

In his own book, Avensjaide, the former presidential adviser who became the official government negotiator in the Sipadan hostage crisis, writes his version of events, of the interpersonal tensions which marred when Abu Sayyaf bandits raided the Malaysian diving resort of Sipadan on April 23, 2000. But his words end up as transparent score-settling. There may be truth to what he has written, but he is a punitive storyteller, and therefore an unreliable witness.

Two vivid anecdotes—stories he had himself) included to highlight—reveal the inner man.

After the Malaysian ambassador made the dangerous error of meeting Abu Sayyaf leaders in their territory, Avensjaide chastised him (but, naturally, in "a firm and measured tone"). The ambassador explained that he had conducted no negotiations, and that he had secured the prior permission of both the foreign secretary and the executive secretary. Avensjaide writes: "I was tempted to tell him where he could shove that permission, but I felt there was nothing more to be gained from further talk with the fellow. I had given him a piece of my mind: I wasn't interested in his opinions and so ended the conversation."

Years after the last foreign hostages were released, Avensjaide continues to be regarded as a fuller, even congressional, negotiator. (Some hostages have accused him and Estrada, on CNN, of taking a cut of the ransom-dollar manna. Both have denied the accusations.) It is easy to understand why he continues to be perceived as having done badly, or the (harshest) job designed to fail.

It is not simply that he was on diplomat. It is mainly because he was the wrong man for the job. As passage after passage reveals, Avensjaide seems incapable of sympathy, of being a bridge between cultures, of hearing his conduct gone long enough to stand to other people's ideas. "Nothing more to be gained." "Given him a piece of my mind." "Wasn't interested in his opinions." It doesn't seem to occur to the presidential adviser that the ambassador he was putting in his place had nine Malaysian hostages to worry about, or that he may have first-hand information from the field that the Philippine government could use. All Avensjaide wanted to do was to tell the envoy what he had told officials of his own government: "I'm in charge here, you hear?"

The several incidents is even more revealing. Stunned by the apparent ingratitude of the first freed European hostage, the German Renate Wallert, who bluntly told him he had not done enough, Avensjaide wrote that it was the woman who had just spent 85 days in the Sulu jungle...After defending his actions, which had led to the release, after almost three months, of a grand total of one hostage, he then wondered: "Had her outlook at the hands of her rapists rendered her a bit unbalanced? I thought."

An uncharitable thought, from an uncharitable man. In his attempt to vindicate himself, Avensjaide even contrasts the unpardonable sin. "The Sulu Sea had always been a dangerous area ... Boats ships vanished in the Sulu Sea as though it was (sic) the Bermuda Triangle. And they, the Europeans, had to pick a spot right smack in the middle of it to spend their vacation in."

In the very small world the fortunately former official inhabits, the victims are to blame. Like everyone else—except, of course, for one firm and measured exception.

## 'Ambition should be made of sterner stuff'

**SEPARATE OPINION**

*Jaggayat A. Cruz*

If in the height of accomplishment for his namesake Brutus is to aspire for the presidency of the Philippine Senate, his undeniable hard-times for that high office. It is the height of foolishness for him to think that he is qualified to be president of the Philippines simply because he is the king of Philippine movies.

Relying on the presumption of law, Vicente Sotto III, a fellow actor with the stronger qualifications for public office, For allowed himself to be tempted into announcing his candidacy for head of the government and chief of state. And he is candid, frankly, he is not even equal. Like he simply said, "I am honest, dedicated, and I love my country."

Millions of Filipinos can claim these commendable attributes but they don't have the temerity to aspire to be president of the Philippines. That position requires more than these laudable traits, which do not necessarily guarantee another indispensable requirement for the highest office in the land. That qualification is competence.

Reporting extensive (How's voter education, has followers say what a more important than mere academic accomplishments is the determination to serve the people. The senatorial (Eh), they insist, has that determination. The trouble is, does he have the intelligence to appreciate what these problems are? Reading the (debates may tell him about these problems but not how to solve them.

Sotto and he (It say that Ate can draft an expert adviser who can run his campaign. (Ha act of government. These will include Sotto himself. To be sure as to who will preside. He be the executive secretary or vice, Heaven forbid, secretary of foreign affairs. As such, he will also choose for his president the "brain trust" first will make the advice decisions on important affairs of state that only For should decide.

The only commendable appointment of President Estrada was to appoint Juan Ponce Enrile as executive Secretary. Enrile is the brain behind half (republic). In the secretary of education, culture and sports in the Pre Cabinet? Gregorio Honasan, the arse head of the Philippine National Police? Michael (J) as Honasan secretary and Enrile Sotto as governor of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas? How about Rudy Fernandez as secretary of the interior, Rudy Miss Quindo as head of social welfare and development and Annabelle Rama as consul-general in Istanbul? And then, of course, Ramon Revilla Jr. soon to be Senate president and John Estrada the Speaker of the House.

Religion was admittedly no great stakes as an intellectual but he served his political opponents like a person of Cabinet rank and his love that as president of the Screen actors Guild in Hollywood. He was acolyte graduate too. Twice elected as president of the United States, he chose a group of acknowledged experts who enabled him to greatly improve the country's economy and the lot of the common (Filipino.

President Manuel L. Quezon was a handsome matinee idol dressed the songs expertly but it was not for these dimensions that he was beloved by the nation during his time. He was an intelligent politician who fervent historian, including his former chief. (An powerful foreign Quezon Sr., and challenged the and a (Gov. Governor General) Leonard Wood during the American regime. Quezon was a dynamic leader, a fiery orator, a quick-witted debater, and, yes, also a ladies' man. His charisma was most substantial. Had a more sober t tapped.

Public office should not be equated with the box office, which is what many mindless voters do today. It is time we put a stop to their tasteless predominance in Philippine elections. Our responsible leaders should check the duality of fiction unless they want our republic degraded into a mimic government of politically inept (and) actors. Please don't let the senatorship of (an heaven—the soldiers and statesmen of the past—who did not fight for our freedom to be commanded by pretenders.

This is not a tract against entertainers in general. They are a responsible part of our society and deserve support for the role they are playing in providing us with emotional respite from the tragic reality that is our lot in this (not an easy) life. But such role must not play his part in the ruling by his choice, such the entertainer's task, in the course of his choice, is to entertain.

All the presidential candidates until you will be counting the elections, especially the administration candidate, should keep their hats that up their (knowledge) for valuable consideration like personal appointments of their cronies or cold hard cash. Among the supplicants will be Fernando Poe Jr., the (assorted name of the baby-crowd and) he holds all the assets would (where happen to re-(birth). Unless I mistake the signs for (omens?), His Majesty do King will be the Chosen One.

## What should we do?

**MOMENTS**

*Fr. Jerry M. Orbos, SVD*

All the Christmas season approaches, let us learn our lessons from pigs and sinners.... They are of no use, and then die.

* * *

In today's Gospel (Lk. 3, 10-18), John was asked the question "What should we do?" His answer was simple: share. "If one has two hand, but, precisely because there are two, all the more we should open our hands to the poor and the needy around us. Thusly we shared, there will be enough for everyone. Have you set aside something in the grave away this Christmas? So you enjoy your stay. Shop, but don't overdo it and remember, please don't forget the poor people around you. Bless, share. Till it hurts.

* * *

What should we do if we have collectors who asked him, "What should we do?" John told them to stop extorting more than what is prescribed. Hello BIR. Hello Bureau of Customs. Hello government officials. Are you listening? Do not deprive our people of what is rightfully theirs. In plain and simple terms, do not thieve. Do not become rich at the expense of our suffering people.

* * *

The soldiers also asked John, "What should we do?" His answer was: Do not practice extortion, do not accuse falsely, and be satisfied with your wages. Hello PNP! Hello AFP! Are you listening? You have been given the arms and the power so that you can protect and defend, and not grab and intimidate. The problem lies in that you do your job well. And that no one is happy or cheated as you rise to higher positions. Did you get your star because you pulled strings, pulled people, or pulled the trigger?

* * *

John himself, when asked whether he was the Messiah, declined that honor for the time. He was clear about his role and his mission. He had no ambition. John, where are you? Please remind all those lining up now for the 2004 elections to concentrate on mission rather than on ambition, and to be satisfied with the gifts the universe (or the Creator) has given them. Let post-election plans and imaginations. Everybody is talking about who will be in the MARKET PRESIDENTIAL TABLE. Different groups have different candidates. They already have their set menus, their table arrangements, and even their own restaurants. In the meantime, the nation is sinking in the kitchen and the people are getting hungry.

* * *

Christmas is in the air. There is a build up of activities and expectations. (And traffic, too) and we all get busy and experience the "BUSH." Through all these, I am grateful that your September Refrigerator, by Lino Sitoy, 1991, had a HELEN inside right at the corridor of the Mission House where I experience quiet and peaceful Christmas moments whenever I stop by. It is as if Jesus, Mary and Joseph are telling me: "Busy, why the rush? Who are you so busy? Who, what is the reason for all that you are doing?" Yes, let us all find time to stop (or whatever) busy "corridor" we are in, and realize again, that indeed, Jesus is the reason for the Christmas season. That's what we all should do.

* * *

Actually we have what we should do. The problem is that we do not do what we should do. If today you hear: Be nice, kinder, set your hearts. Do not postpone your conversion. Be not prodigal your living.

* * *

This week, we begin our Apokalipsis Dawn Masses once again. This sacrifice of getting up early and being alert to the Lord is a beautiful preparation for the Feast. Today Remember: Christmas has to happen in the heart. May we all experience a peaceful, grace-filled Christmas. May we all listen to the Lord with our hearts. Indeed, it is only with the heart that one can see rightly.

* * *

The problem with some people is that, they get busy at Christmas with wrapping and partying, and they forget cleaning (hearts) and mending (relationships). Today is Gaudete Sunday. Prepare for His coming with joy! This reminds me of a story of an old priest who came before St. Peter, no gloomy and dim before. He looked sadly on Peter. He What did he have with him? "My child, actually there was a typographical error somewhere. 'Celibate' should have been spelled 'Celebrate,' and, indeed should have been spelled 'Rejoice!'"

Let us rejoice in spite of everything and continue to see God's loving smile and feel His caress wherever we are, whatever we are going through.

* * *

Couples who need help and want to make their marriage work, you are invited for a Retrouvaille Weekend Dec. 12-14, 2001 at the Social Formation House in Antipolo City. For particulars and registration, you may contact either Dr. Ben Medina at 631-99-58; Tony and Cops at 433-24-34; Mark and Bernie at 0917-7950663; or Billie and Mark at 890-1002; 900-2371.

* * *

**A Moment with Be Lord**

Lord, sometimes my spirit wins! I should be, and give me the strength to do what I should be. Amen.

# Philippine foreign policy is based on fear

REVILLE

Ramon J. Farolan

IT was the annual Christmas party of the Philippine Ambassadors' Association headed by my GI High colleague, Horacio Lanuzo, former ambassador to Brazil and the Philippines' ambassador to Labor Association (FAO), led by Tita Morales who spent much of her diplomatic life in Nairobi, Kenya with husband Sonny.

The guest of honor at the luncheon was Sen. Manuel Villar, chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, who as member several years back, took Chinese nationality by surprise, by his lightning action in transmitting to the Senate the impeachment rap against Erap when everyone thought he was just going through the motions of opening the day's session. Of course, the rap is history and Villar is the fortunate catapulted him to the ranks of the Senate where he eventually replaced Blas Ople as Foreign Relations chair.

Like others in the audience, I was wondering what expertise or experience in foreign affairs did Villar possess to qualify him for the Senate Foreign Relations chair. I had always known him as a real estate and not of government, once wrote when he was still in the Senate. He said: "Foreign policy has about it an air of significance that it does not deserve. It is not a special province of arcane knowledge that only a few experts are able to attain. Our policy is inextricably linked with and grew out of our own fundamental economic and the vital interests of the Filipino people and are, just a few observers have remarked on the incredibly provincial core of Philippine politics."

Sen. Villar just beginning to enjoy our coffee and perhaps, close our eyes every once and then [illegible] house of [illegible] proud for those advanced in age], when after a while we began to get the drift of his remarks.

Villar was telling his audience that Philippine foreign policy was a product based mainly on fear, fear of offending the United States, fear of offending China and Japan, fear of offending Asean solidarity. Our main concern appeared to be how to avoid offending others. That is when people began to sit up and listen.

He related his experience with a planned visit to Taiwan. He had long put off the visit for one reason or another, and one day he decided to finally accept the invitation from his hosts. He mentioned this to Senate President Franklin Drilon who counted by exercising him almost the supernatural such a visit might have on our relations with China. Villar replied that as a Filipino senator, no one could dictate to him where he should or should not go.

He expressed concern over our continued [illegible] once in Iraq, considering the dangers posed by the increasingly active resistance movement in that country for an administration zealous in its efforts to curry favor with the official administration policy of cooperation with the US-led coalition. Moreover, the Philippines is one of 34 countries whose soldiers led by the Pentagon is bid for recolonization projects in Iraq.

Perhaps, Villar was simply summing up the fear of his own words regarding our position in many [illegible] affairs. The position should be based on a regard for the interests of the people, rather than on the principle of accommodation.

* * *

Last week, I checked out the status of Philippine foreign service establishment around the world. As of this month, we had a total of 82 posts, including 62 embassies and 20 consulates general. As expected, we have the most number of embassies in the Asia-Pacific region, followed by those in Europe and in the Middle East. In terms of ambassadorial appointments, out of 62, 33 are non-career officials. Among the more prominent political appointees are Francisco Elba (Vatican), Mrs. Soc. Velasco Gaccion (Bel.), Cecilio(Sr.), Salgado, Eugenio Ermita (United Kingdom) and Joseph Bernardo (Spain). Their terms are coterminous with that of the appointing power. Non-career officials make up the bulk of our representatives in the Americas. Out of nine embassies, six are headed by political appointees. Francisco Benedicto (Colombia), Consuelo Pepe Reyes (Chile), Virginia Rivera Montesano (Cuba), Aida Tirona (Mexico), Laura Raja in (Peru [illegible]), and Albert del Rosario (Venezuela).

In terms of consular-general we have a total of 20, all of them career officials.

* * *

Although this is easier said than done, perhaps we should review the existing utilization of so many political appointees in the foreign service. While some posts may require special skills and qualifications calling for such appointments, we can less develop a core of dispassionate diplomats whose loyalty is to the country. The professionals provide expertise to carry out the work for which they have been trained and for which they possess the necessary experience. It is also important that they be shifted not just in diplomatic practice but also in market development and trade negotiations.

# Two weddings, one family

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

MAKIKASO and weddings have been very much on the outside of my family this past week.

Last Monday, my sister Bail Salgot and her fiancé, Ariel Ramos, were called "betrothed sweethearts" in the family home in Cubao.

Both Pam, an obstetrician-gynecologist, and Jonathan, an architect, are based in Arizona. They have called home a few times during the year, but when they announced January as the month they'd be in Honolulu, Bail wasted not just to introduce Jonathan to her mother, my sister Rosario, but also to set Nanong take part, in some way, in the ceremony.

The preparations got under way with the arrival of Linda, Nanong's youngest daughter, a week earlier. With my sister Claire and sisters-in-law Sue, they scoured Nanong's blotter for a supplier of wedding cakes. Linda wanted to use as a signature "cake" for the day.

On the evening of Dec. 8, which is also my late mother's birthday, they managed to convert the grounds of the Cubao home into a tropical paradise, with pineapple and coconut centerpieces for the tables of the garden, candles flickering from corners and ledges, and an altar beneath a canopy of flickering fresh lights.

Bail, resplendent in a white lace gown, a source of unpopular on her hair and carrying a bouquet of red roses and more unpopular buds, with Nanong by her side, the atmosphere was rich with emotion.

Claire was pulling off the hastily-prepared occasion, though, while just all of us there were meeting Jonathan and knowing that Bail had finally met the man with whom she would share her life. Beautiful and accomplished among sisters and cousins, she had always been considered the one who could meet her exacting standards. But to Jonathan we found a man of good humor and easygoing ways, tolerant of our teasing and our gathering him in as one of us, one with charm and ease. Best of all, he seems genuinely happy to be part of the family, and we have welcomed him with open hearts.

**Ahh then it was our turn.**

**Bip husband Pit and I celebrated our fifteen Wedding Anniversary (the ones ding ding. 9, 10** had taken more than a year of planning, list-making, shopping and menu-managing a thousand-and-one details and I could hardly believe the day was drawing.

When I first broached the idea of a celebration in which all our families and friends would be invited, Pit protested that he didn't want to hitch up a fuss. But I told him that if he wanted to, he could go fishing with his pals and I would invite the Blues and everybody else.

When my parents celebrated their own Silver Wedding anniversary, I remember wondering how two people could stand being with each other for so long. Wouldn't it be boring? Wouldn't they start getting on each other's nerves?

But the years from 1979 to 2003 just sped by. And through two children, two homes, two busy and fulfilling careers and the ups and downs of life from illnesses to age—Pit and I not only managed to remain married but somehow we continued to enjoy each other's company.

If that wasn't reason enough to celebrate, we also wanted to thank everyone who had stayed by our side. Pit's family and friends, Ate Ely, Mike Ali, Pit maintained not just by the couple or their children, but by everyone who formed them, a village of caring and nurturing and cheering and commiserating. And for all of them we wanted to throw a party!

* * *

THERE are so many people to thank for helping make the evening a success.

Nating Salgot, Bail's grandmother, rallied up the last Magsaysay to make a reservation when I brought up the matter last January. While other people, including my husband, were just laughing off my [illegible] words premature preparations, Mabuti his own suggested I write Carlitos his and request that he officiate at our renewal of vows.

Father Gaudiel, the Cubao priest to asking, but he gave us and our children time last Tuesday to come up to his office and receive his blessings.

Officiating at the vows was my brother, Fr. Ruben Jimenez, SVD, with seven priests: Fr. Fred, Fr. Garcia and Fr. Ilijan from the Dominican community in San Juan, family friends from way way back. Peachy Tantuico was our communicator and troubleshooter, making sure most extravagant requests were met and that everything was entered.

Millie Reyes of The Plaza staffer outdoing, Myra Versales, unmatched things over. The minute we decided to hold the reception at the grounds of the Black and White Club, Commo. Chali there could possibly have helped refer our services.

Our coordinator, Tintin Abellar, took up her duties not just with conscientiousness but also with a passion to make the night truly memorable. But the credit and the "well done"s belong to Linda, who had been planning for the day before made her professionalism all that more admirable.

I would also like to acknowledge the many dear Jay Gonzaga, Flaud, Jacks, Bey and Ate who all pitched in to make sure things went smoothly. As well as my daughter Mayes Kristelle Vilma, Bill and Soleil.

My sister Gemmy and friend Jacelyn Cayco-Pura "choreographed" the whole shebang for the night, and what excellent choices they were!

But what would the night be without music? After we heard Noy Cayco and his jazz band perform at Claire's, we decided they had to play at the reception. The Pura Band which also plays every Wednesday at the Silka (their only night out Mon memorable), and they dazzled our guests with their surprise requests numbers later.

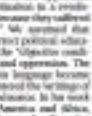
Finally, a great big thanks to the Bette Yuan Company for performing one of the cybercafe love songs: Gershwin's "Someone to Watch Over Me," their cut gratitude to Ate Mari and Lulu Rhonda of Tuluyan for the mixed and [illegible]

It was thrilling tonight, it was a great big ol. Lugi was just to celebrate marriage but to celebrate it as well!

# In a world of images

PUBLIC LIVES

Randy David



IT must have been one of the many spokespersons of the President. Someone from Malacañang recently made a point of saying that Gloria Macapagal Arroyo is President in "the real world." The remark was clearly meant to draw a sharp contrast between GMA, a "real" President, and FPJ, an aspirant from the imaginary world of the movies. Any serious student of philosophy however might tell us that the statement, early as it may be, makes sense only if there is a way of knowing the "real world" except through our images of it. There is none.

Modern science may often seem as if it offers us certain access to the picture of the world "as it really is." But this picture is just one more image—albeit from another angle, using more instruments of observation. Even in the field of medicine, for instance, the President received a serious if satisfactory rating. That rating depicts her as a non-performing President, insofar as it is, that is the image that the Filipino public has of her at this time. We can see through the lenses of a public opinion poll.

We get to know reality only through appearances, whether we use our everyday common sense or the sophisticated methods of science. There is no way to "bracket" them in, as if "touching beyond the images or behind it." The only opposite of appearance is not reality but illusion. The only opposite of an image is not the thing "in itself" but another image.

All this is to say that we are well advised not to denigrate images of character derived from the movies or television. They are as "real" as the perceptions that public officials make of their performance. To argue that one is different, that is to say that the use of the movies, viewers are prompted to suspend belief, whereas in politics there is no such warning. When politicians present their qualifications and achievements on television, they expect their claims to be believed.

The remarkableness of the post is as true as those

condition. There is nothing false about it. They are the world necessarily from the prism of their own beliefs and values. The habits of thought that constitute the core of their consciousness are products of their specific formation as a human community. There is no reason why we should be limited by the standpoint of certain gods, but it is not inferior.

There was a time when I, like many from the Left, uncritically accepted terms like "false consciousness" and "objective conditions." When people subjected to oppression and oppressors failed to respond to our calculations in a revolutionary way we said it was because they suffered from "false consciousness." We asserted that what they needed was a correct political education to enable them to see the "objective conditions" of their existence in the proper perspective. The patronizing arrogance of this language becomes evident to me when I reconsidered the writings of Paulo Freire, the Brazilian educator. In his work among the poor of Latin America and Africa, Freire insisted that the people must be allowed to "create their own words."

But the other side of this process is equally important. Those of us who claim to see better and are inclined to reach must also learn the ability to look inward and review our own perspectives. For how many others he ridiculed his assumptions and prejudices that prevent us from assigning any value to others' opinions even before we have understood where they are coming from.

We typically assume, for example, that the voting behavior of the poor is not rational or that they choose candidates who do not possess the experience and qualifications that we think are essential to the position they seek. We forget that rationality is relative. People have different concepts of the ideal leader. These are not unchanging notions; they depend very much on people's perception of the situations in which they find themselves in any given moment.

In late 1985, after Marcos suddenly announced the holding of a snap election in February the following year, the public-opinion ground for a presidential candidate who could successfully challenge the incumbent that opposed Marcos. Primarily, was secondary, everyone opposed Marcos in that. Experience and readiness to discharge the duties of the presidency were also secondary. The important thing was to defeat the machine of Marcos and his cronies. That was it. The widow of a former senator husband had been murdered by the regime, a housewife with no previous experience in politics who could tell Marcos—the consummate politician—that she also did not have any experience in politics.

Yet we were not wanting in leaders who could lead the country out of the nightmare of martial law. The venerable Lorenzo Tañada, who led countless demonstrations against the dictatorship, was still around. Jovito Salonga, too. Or Doy Laurel. Undeterred by his incarceration in Marcos jails, he articulated the clearest vision of a nation for our children. So was Jesús E. Salonga, the scholar-statesman who led the Senate that closed the American bases in the Philippines and, to the day, continues to fight for their recovery. They all enjoyed wide support from the people.

Analysts may say that the public's choice of a leader may not always be the right one for the times. That is a judgment that will precede from the specific perspectives of a given set of goods and values. In a world of images, we can only look at results from different perspectives. We have no recourse to a neutral or external perspective lying outside human affairs.

* * *

*Comments to randy@pdfi.net.ph*

# US hands Chen big dilemma

NEWS ANALYSIS

William Foreman

TAIPEI, Taiwan—The Taiwanese president's plan annual chiefs to Iran Enclin center, ambassador rival China and make history by holding historic first shuttle. Schwandtner—a year about whether the massive Chinese military should stop patrolling hundreds of missiles at the tiny island.

The program began unwinding quickly when one of Taiwan's biggest supporters, US President George W. Bush, expressed serious [illegible] cross on Tuesday. Bush directly told that the impression Taiwanese leader pushed too hard, and the referendum could be in jeopardy.

The events highlight a political reality for Taiwan: China can be boldly challenged, but America shouldn't be messed with. As the most important powerbroker in the Taiwan Strait, Washington usually wins the argument.

Bush's warning marked the sharpest US rebuke of President Chen Shui-bian since the former Taipei mayor was elected nearly four years ago. The most stinging thing about it was that Bush dressed down Chen while China's new premier, Wen Jiabao, sat by his side in the White House.

Although Bush didn't specifically oppose the referendum planned for March 20—the same day Chen seeks re-election—the president warned that he opposed "any unilateral decision by either China or Taiwan to change the status quo."

Taiwan got the message. Any referendum threatens to shake the delicate balance across the 160-kilometer-wide Taiwan Strait.

Beijing believes self-ruled Taiwan is part of China, and it fears the referendum might serve to inject the second boldest and close experiment right. So far China, even tolerantism an immediate return prior a threat of leading to an independence vote—which Beijing has threatened to use force to stop.

A test could quickly involve the United States, which has defended Taiwan before.

Until now, Taiwanese leaders didn't dare test the referendum limit. Chen's Democratic Progressive Party has long held that the Taiwanese have the right to vote on their future. A law legalizing referendums was passed last month.

China complained and issued some bellicose threats. But China didn't carry—and many have even welcomed the blame. He poll numbers usually go up when China threatens the spunky Taiwanese.

But Chen's referendum threats was also too much for America, said David M. Lampton, professor of China studies at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland. Chen has inserted himself in US politics at a bad time, with Bush burdened with Iraq, Afghanistan and North Korea, he said. The Taiwanese president has also been throwing little he regard for US interests, he added.

"I think you've just seen a progressive overplaying of his hand by Chen, and finally... President Bush in his own way said, 'I've had enough,'" Lampton said.

Further he thinks Chen chose to to make it clear that Chen Shui-bian did not have a blank check to be filled out in America's behalf."

The Taiwanese president remained defiant Wednesday, reiterating that the referendum wouldn't challenge the status quo with China. He also argued that it was ironic that China was pointing missiles at Taiwan, yet the Taiwanese were being accused of being provocative.

Despite the planned referendum as a normal democratic right. "The people of Taiwan have the right to say loudly 'We are against the missiles,' we want democracy, we are against war, we want peace," Chen said.

Canceling the referendum would be extremely hard for Chen, who is locked in an intense election battle. Scuttling the vote would expose him to scathing criticism from the opposition, which is trying to brand him as a reckless leader who damages ties with China threats and doesn't appreciate his friends, namely America.

Philip Yang, a political scientist at the elite National Taiwan University said Bush's strong words put Chen in a dangerous position. The vote's original purpose—consolidating civic opposition and attracting moderates—might backfire, he said. Many of these voters will be scared away from Chen if he can't keep Washington happy, Yang said.

"That he might damage his stand and must shifting to another issue," Yang said.

Dan Lynch, a professor of international relations at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, said Chen might have been able to avoid the scene of crisis if he had said sooner that the referendum would be no on China's military threat.

But Lynch added, "he probably they wanted a series of crisis for the world's attention on Taiwan, which they feel they have to do from time to time given the tendency of the world to focus on China."

AP

## THEY SAID

### De-odorant

"The words best de Castro to deodorize her upper lamella politics."

—Similarly Rony Lim Jr. Bautista on plans of previous senator to be the running mate of President Macapagal-Arroyo

### Active tongue

"I am still big but I am not keeping quiet. You can not stop me from speaking."

—Former Senator Joker Arroyo

### Real and reel life?

"We do not have make believe movie situations like those in his screen movies where he has directors and writers to coach him. Our society has real-life problems and it's not enough that the president is good looking."

—K. Rober Hayes and other Bayanihan Para Sa Kaunlaran Inc. decline of its former chair records of prosperity

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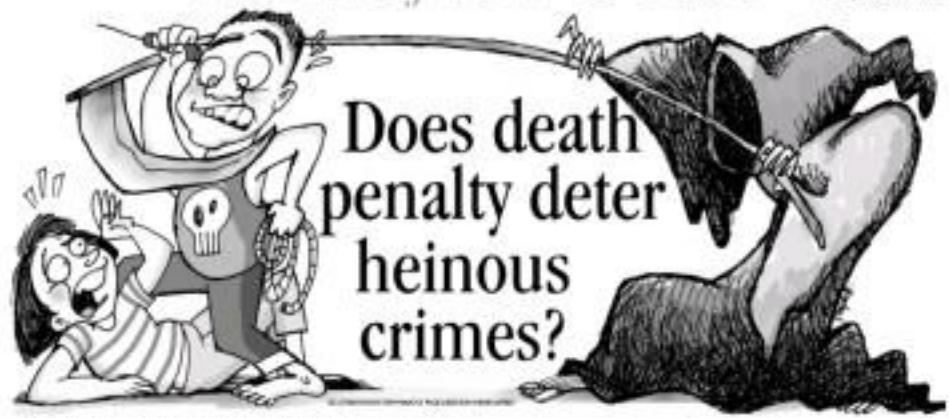
# TALK *of the* TOWN

Please send feedback to [illegible]@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Jean V. Sarmiento Jr.




A BILL the chance of the Chinese-Filipino community for the restoration of the death penalty. President Macapagal-Arroyo said on Nov. 24, that capital punishment would not solve the rash of kidnappings.

"We have had executions in the past and these have provided a mere salve to vent the public's ire against hardened criminals. But these executions did not stop heinous crime," she said in a statement.

The President said the more effective way of deterring heinous crimes was for the entire criminal justice system—the police, prosecution, courts and correctional structure—to team up with the community.

Eleven days later the President made a turnaround. She said she was lifting the four-year-old moratorium on the death penalty because she "must yield to the higher public interest when demanded by extraordinary circumstances."

She said she would no longer stand in the way of the executions scheduled by the courts for January. Her officials later said that only convicted kidnappers and drug traffickers would be subjected to lethal injection.

The Chinese-Filipino community hailed her decision, but other groups, including the Catholic Church and El Shaddai, did not.

Studies have shown that capital punishment does not deter the commission of heinous crimes. They also show that not all death convicts, mostly from the lower classes, are criminals.

Because she lifted the moratorium a few months before the May elections, many believe that her move was meant to appease the economically powerful Chinese-Filipino community and to get their support for her presidential campaign.

## Give penalty a chance to work

I fully agree with the implementation of the death penalty because it was never given the chance to be fully implemented. Hence, there is no basis to say that it isn't effective. Now is the time to test how it can be effective. It is only fitting that we give it a chance to prove its worth. And I do believe that the government is master this time. **Arturo Salvacion, regional governor, Northern Mindanao, Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Cagayan de Oro**

I am against the re-imposition of the death penalty. First, it is not a deterrent to crime. In fact, in the whole of Europe (where not a single country is imposing death penalty), the crime rate is decreasing, unlike in the United States which imposes death penalty. Second, given the inefficiency of our police and antiquated methods of investigation, there is a strong possibility of convicting innocent people and imposing on them the capital punishment. Third, death penalty is irreversible. Once the convict is executed, even if it is ultimately found that there had been a miscarriage of justice, you cannot retrieve his life. Fourth, I am a Roman Catholic. I agree with the Pope and the bishops that death is a barbaric form of punishment. Capital punishment by the State is one form of legalized murder. **Delmundo C. Bacarisas, president of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines, Cebu City chapter**

## It's against human rights

The European Union is unified in its opposition to the re-imposition of the death penalty. It is inhuman. It is against human rights, against logic. We are really very upset over this issue of death penalty. We expressed in the last few days to many public officials our position on it. We sincerely hope that this decision be reconsidered. **Umberto Colombi, Italian Ambassador, Davao**

It's about time that the death penalty be revived to punish criminals, especially the kidnappers and the so-called drug lords. The President's decision means that, finally, she has found the political will. And I salute her. Others might interpret her decision, especially her political opponents, that she is just appeasing the Chinese-Filipino community. Actions.

The rising level of criminality must be curbed. Our economy will continue to suffer if personal trips coming for fear of being kidnapped. The imposition of the death penalty will help deter kidnapping for ransom and the illegal drug trade.

Criminals as they are, criminals will think twice before committing evil deeds. Nobody, including the criminals, would like to see their lives being snuffed out. Lastly, I hope that we, as a people, unite behind the decision of the President. I believe that she is only after the good of our country. **Wilson P. Pascual Jr., Lions Club, Lucena**

We need leaders who are fearless in implementing the laws. The greatest deterrent to crime is the certainty of arrest and the coming out of justice without fear or favor. Key to this is putting law enforcement in the hands of qualified and upright men and women who are well-trained and well-paid.

We ought to give the government time to solve crime. Miracles don't happen overnight as what our detractors seek for us performing to vote for illusion rather than for reality. Let us be optimistic, patient and supportive of the government. **Christine F. Godinez-Ortega, writer and literature professor, Baguio City**

## The President succumbed to pressure

One reason for unrepented abuse for those who are true to their religious beliefs, the lifting of the moratorium on the implementation of the death penalty runs counter to the pro-life teachings of the Church. Only those who don't see it from the religious perspective may agree with the death penalty, but only when the justice system, particularly the police, is credible.

Since the police system is not yet credible, it is not the time for the imposition of the death penalty.

I believe that the death penalty is not a deterrent to crime. Those who carry out suicide bombings have shown willingly. Those who may be forced to lose their hungry fanatics will definitely be willing to risk death out of desperation. The haunts of big syndicates are not the ones who will be arrested and therefore do not care at all. The small fry, who will be arrested and the death penalty can easily be replaced.

There is no doubt that President Macapagal-Arroyo was pressured into lifting the moratorium by the Chinese-Filipino community. This is a community that usually controls the country's economy and it is affected by the rash of kidnappings. It is difficult to antagonize the community because it can do worse than kidnapping. Considering that the elections are very near, it would be very difficult to count its displeasure. **Dr. Rolando Dimagiba, professor, optometrist and cum conscribo, Bohol**

Kidnapping is nothing new in Mindanao. Kidnappers don't discriminate whether the victim is a child or adult, man or woman, so long as there is the promise of ransom, or of proceeds from the sale of kidnapped victims as slaves.

Many such cases including rape against men and women go unreported. Please the victims cope when they are released or how they lose if they're not released until victimized, murdered.

We ought to address the root problems: poor morals prevailing among our leaders and poor implementation of our laws.

Beyond leaders who use fear to misapply or misuse the laws. The greatest deterrent to crime is the certainty of arrest and the coming out of justice without fear or favor. Key to this is putting law enforcement in the hands of qualified and upright men and women who are well-trained and well-paid.

We ought to give the government time to solve crime. Miracles don't happen overnight as what our detractors seek for us performing to vote for illusion rather than for reality. Let us be optimistic, patient and supportive of the government. **Christine F. Godinez-Ortega, writer and literature professor, Baguio City**

## We're barking up the wrong tree

The President's lifting of the moratorium on death penalty could be politically motivated, i.e., to pacify the Chinese-Filipino community. How she has to contend with the give-life cronies. I am not sure if this can be resolved in terms of numbers. The more basic question is—should we allow the death penalty to be imposed (limited to our law)? Will it serve as a deterrent to heinous crimes? Will killing one criminal make others think twice or scores or less? Maybe not. We really need to address the root causes—poverty, power, and morality, good. What I am trying to say is the death penalty may not be the approach to solving crimes—we may be barking up the wrong tree. **Roberto D. Rivera, dean, presidency administrator, School of Political Science, Diamond Hill, Baguio (Formerly Ateneo)**

Punishment for a crime is intended to deter criminality. No matter what the penalty is, the legislators must make sure the purpose is effective. If there is a less severe punishment would. While a severe punishment may deter criminality, there is no solid evidence that death as a penalty has served as an effective deterrent against the commission of serious offenses.

The rise in criminality is not due to the lack of severe punishment. It is the lack of political will to criminally charge and imprison policemen on the ministerial and personal. A good number of those who end up being charged in court are those who cannot buy their freedom from those tasked with enforcing the law.

Lifting the moratorium on death penalty will not stop the commission of serious offenses. If freedom from being charged can be bought at a price from those who implement the law, an increase of penalty can drive criminal activity. There must be political will and resolve to honestly and effectively implement the laws against whomsoever and no matter what, then fines can punishment deter criminality. **Virgilio Fidel Mesiago, dean, Ateneo de Davao University Law School and member of the Free Legal Assistance Group**

Lifting the moratorium on death penalty will not solve criminality at the country. I am annoyed by the sudden announcement of President Macapagal-Arroyo on this issue.

The worsening criminality shows that the present leadership should have more political will in making our laws work. We have enough laws to ensure that justice is served in this country. The only problem is that law enforcement agencies are corrupt and are not empowered enough to work.

Our police department must ensure that those who have been in life must have more than enough to live on. Only then can we say that we are serious in our campaign against crime. **Atty. Jesus Rilloza, trustee, St. Peter College Seminary, San Pablo City**

## The President did the right thing

GMA did the right thing when she lifted the moratorium on death penalty. But it should not be focused on convicted kidnappers alone. What about other convicted criminals like rapists, terrorists, drug lords and those who killed people?

These criminals should be punished according to what the law dictates to let them know that there are laws in place in our country. Criminals are no longer afraid of committing grave offenses because no hard penalties are being imposed.

I don't think GMA lifted the moratorium just to get the votes of the Chinese-Filipino community. If it is indeed politically motivated, I don't see anything wrong with that. All politicians have their strategy of gaining sympathy from voters in order for them to get elected. **Raymund Escalante, public information officer, Department of Labor and Employment 8, Tagaytay City**

Death penalty does not solve the problem. It has not deterred heinous crimes. Does the lifting of the moratorium will no doubt the crime rate has gone up? Why only now? Is this a tacit acknowledgement of the helplessness of the authorities? Have we exhausted all the means? That this move would translate into votes for GMA remains to be seen. It is only in the affirmation of life that life can be lived. **Pastor Noel Vasquez, Jr., United Church of Christ in the Philippines**

The President's move is meant to court votes from the predominantly pro-death penalty voters of this country. Every month in Davao, I have to go to order kidnapping or the illegal drugs trade the government must first address poverty. It is obvious that since no suspension a few years back, heinous crimes like rape, robbery and murder have increased alarmingly.

In the Zamboanga Peninsula, there are still many actually abused children housed at different government institutions and drug cases are increasing in almost all provinces.

Drug pushers often go back to their trade after getting bail. Many of these don't like to go back to the trade after serving time. Because they have no regular income to feed the family, they return to drug pushing.

In Zamboanga del Norte there are only three celebrated cases of kidnapping over the last 10 years. Like its neighbor Zamboanga Sibugay, kidnapping is not as rampant compared to Metro Manila, and this is because the two provinces are not as poor compared to the metro agenda.

But drug pushing is rampant in Zamboanga del Sur, Dumaguete City and Misamis Occidental. Zamboanga del Norte's best remembered in the hearts of fellow Surigaonons of the famous Surigaong Balay-Balay Festival. The young Bombo Radyo City and the province are in place for rest and recreation. It shows that kidnapping is a 'lucrative' business for small employers and the jobless in the country.

The government to come to the certainty of arrest and the coming out of justice without fear or favor. **Lolito Mendiola, Silliman University, Dipolog City**

Interviews by Nia Pil, Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao Bureaus

E-mail at: [illegible]

Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

Across the NATION

# Tribes seek bigger role in peace talks

BONTOC, Mt. Province—With the pending resumption of peace talks between the government and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), peace advocates here are pushing for representation in both panels of government and NDFP.

Peace advocates in Cordillera are also calling for the government to implement the Comprehensive Agreement on the Respect of Human Rights and the International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL).

Wyndel Balangui, secretary general of Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA), said the implementation of CARHRIHL—the first point agenda between the government and the NDFP which was signed in 1998—can ensure the advancement of peace talks and the end of human rights violations among tribal communities, which CPA claimed are "highly militarized."

He made this statement during the celebration of the Human Rights Day on Wednesday attended by peace activists, government employees, church, government and public officials.

The proponents on peace talks between both panels should not miss the issues of the indigenous peoples who are often victims of the skirmishes between the government troops and the communist rebels, said Donaldo Dumlao, former member of the National Unification Commission.

"If you look at the military report, you would notice that all the skirmishes are happening in our ancestral domain. They are waging war in our land and spilling it with their blood," Dumlao said.

"They do not know the surrenderee of the land, and after the war, we are left behind to pick up the pieces. The tribes only want peace in our lands because land is sacred," she added.

Bontoc and indigenous peoples should be represented in the resumption of peace talks to articulate the issues of tribal communities in different regions.

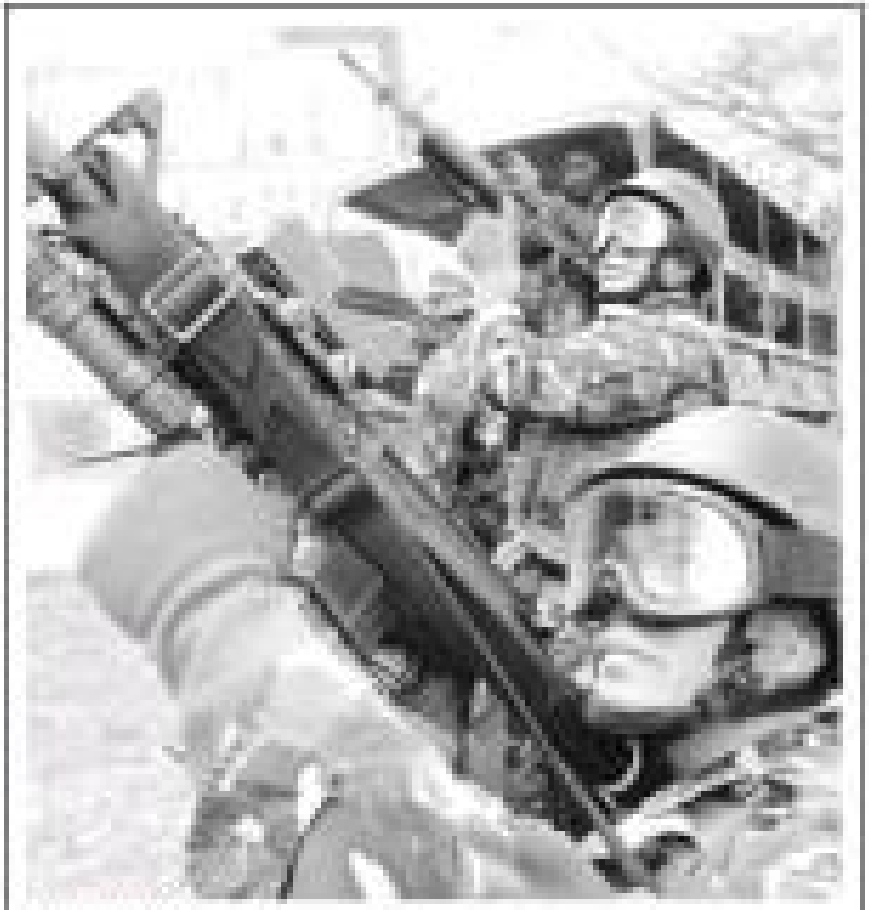
She said the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), both separatist groups, were only given roles as observers in the negotiations.

Balangui, however, said peace talks could pursue without any members of the indigenous peoples community as long as both panels recognize the rights of indigenous peoples in the country.

On the part of the NDFP, the panel has consulted Igorot elders in The Netherlands, where NDFP-chief political consultant Jose Maria Sison was self-exiled, in the drafting of the peace agreements.

"The CARHRIHL has a provision on indigenous peoples' rights. All the government has to do is to implement it and to respect our rights. But whether or not we are an indigenous people, our rights should be respected," said Balangui.

The talks, however, should consist of the peace and human rights aspects of the other in the Cordillera and Mindanao where militarization has become a problem, said Jose Carling-chot of the CPA, Benito Cariaso, PIO Pio Rio's Lacon Bureau



AMBUSHER
Members of the 1st Light Reaction Co. of the Philippine military aim their weapons at imaginary targets during a training on counter-terrorism in Zamboanga City.

# Drums of toxic chemicals feared to leak, cause contamination

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Environment officials here have raised alarm over the deteriorating condition of the 50 drums containing highly toxic chemicals locked at the Western Mindanao regional health office building in Barangay Calarian.

During the recent House hearing held here on the confiscated smuggled chemicals composed to [illegible] kept leaking. She, environment officials warned of [illegible] could danger to the health of the residents unless the chemicals were properly [illegible].

They told the House committee on good governance, chaired by Davao Rep. Ruy Elias Lopez, that the drums holding the chemicals were already showing signs of deterioration and a leak would be likely [illegible] representatives [illegible] to [illegible] drums on November 6.

"The deterioration could cause danger to lives and the environment," a DENR official told the committee.

The 50 drums contained volatile substances such as methylene chloride and toluene, both components for the manufacture of shabu.

Reserves of the drums were confiscated aboard the MV Lady Mary Joy 3, which docked at Isabela, Basilan on June 16, while the remaining containers were seized from a warehouse in Barangay Tumaga here on July 1.

Who had consistently denied owning the shipment.

But the Department of Justice, in a resolution dated April 2, 2003, dismissed the filing of criminal charges against those implicated in the illegal importation of the 50 drums of chemicals, including Wee.

A motion for reconsideration, however, is pending before the DOJ.

"I reiterate that it is politically motivated when the name of the administration was dragged in in the illegal importation of the chemicals. Aside from the fact that I do not wish to waste the time of the committee since I have no knowledge on the illegal importation, I am convinced the whole world is aware of the business matters which cannot be postponed," Wee told Lopez. Belle A. Rosales, PDI Mindanao Bureau

# Cost to gov't of SC tax rule 'unimaginable'

BAGUIO CITY—All firms leasing former American base lands in the country are taking solutions from the Bases Conversion Development Authority, after the BCDA lost a Supreme Court case which had questioned the tax benefits enjoyed by special economic zones.

The big news learned this on Friday from a BCDA spokesperson who advised that the ruling would turn off investors of the BCDA economic zones in Camp John Hay here, Poro Point in La Union and the former Clark Air Base in Pampanga.

The Supreme Court ruled on Oct. 30 that former President Fidel Ramos did not have any authority to prescribe tax incentives and tariff immunities to investors and accredited suppliers of all economic zones governed by the BCDA.

The decision nevertheless did not affect companies already operating in the zones, the BCDA said.

Should all firms pull out because of the ruling's implications, the cost to the government "would be unimaginable," Cable said.

Computing from BCDA payment revenues obtained by the locators, these firms may owe the government in excess of P100 billion from the time they started operations between 1996 and 1998.

On Friday, the developer of Camp John Hay took both BCDA and Malacañang to task for exempting the mall's tenancies where the government offered the 299-hectare John Hay special economic zone to investors for redevelopment issue in a 1995 public bidding.

Lawyer Gina Alvarez, senior vice president for legal affairs of the Camp John Hay Development Corp. (CJHDevCo), said the terms of reference for the 1995 public bidding for Camp John Hay did not explain the legal difficulties it was undergoing when it promised investors full tax incentives. CJHDevCo's Dec. 12 letter to the BCDA said the firm would not to sue, back some P4 billion it had invested in Camp John Hay, should the government fail to resolve its tax crisis.

Cable said the ruling affects CJHDevCo, the Camp John Hay Master, the Camp John Hay Golf Club, which are all run by a PH Estate-led consortium, and the Ayala-led Pueblo Inn, which operates a commercial strip at the Camp John Hay special economic zone.

The same predicament will haunt the Bell-Famillion Inc. at the Poro Point Freeport Zone, a beneficiary of the same proclamation, and some 100 locators at the Clark Special Economic Zone, she said.

Former Tourism Secretary Jose Antonio Gonzales, chair of Mondragon Leisure&Res, had inquired from CJHDevCo last week about the ruling.

Mondragon, the former operator of the Mimosa Leisure Zone in the Clark Special Economic Zone, is vulnerable to a retroactive tax collection because of its tax liabilities with Clark Development Corp.

Most of the BCDA-administered firms have wanted consolidating their legal opinions, according to the CJHDevCo lawyer.

Alvarez also said Cable that CJHDevCo could threaten its renegotiated payment for the year because of a P1-billion rental debt. BCDA granted the firm a graduated payment scheme. Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

RESCUERS and firefighters remove the body of one of the fatalities in a fire that gutted a nightclub in Baguio City and killed eight people. most of them women working as entertainers in the club.

# Only 1 of 8 fatalities in Baguio fire identified

BAGUIO CITY—Only one of eight fatalities in a night-club fire here last Thursday has been identified so far by the Baguio fire department.

Arson investigator Bernardo Bravo said a relative of Marvin Panuncio, a worker of Penion Bar, came to identify his remains.

"It's the nature of the job that they use fictitious names. Even the vouchers (in Pereia's) cannot identify their operators," Bravo said.

Finally electrical wiring was being looked at as the cause of the fire that gutted the Tenebrarcia building housing the Penion Bar on Magsaysay Avenue.

The names of the fatalities, who were mostly dancers, were given by their friends. They included Marivel Galindo, Jane Montellibano, Mila Mondejardin and Cherry Fajardo.

Bravo, however, said their names were still being verified and only their relatives could positively identify them.

The rest of the victims were identified only as Joy Nene and Mimi. The victims were all killed by asphyxiation from the burns of the fire that broke out in one of the rooms of Penion Bar at 10:45 a.m. on Thursday.

Their bodies were recovered an hour later in their cramped bedroom, which was accessible only through a very narrow passageway.

A waiters known as Gary slept on the stage and was able to climb out. He said he cried out to help but the fires was too dark and smoky.

Bravo said they would rely only on the identities provided by the municipal legal officer of the Philippine National Police in Cordillera.

The six female fatalities were identified by other workers of Bernie as dancers of the Mikit Go-Inside Mobile based in Laguna.

They were only working for 10 days at the club when the fire broke out. Frank Cimaru, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

# Roxas matriarch elated son to follow late grandpa's footsteps

By Raj Padilla
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—There could be no prouder mom than Judy Araneta-Roxas, widow of the late Sen. Gerardo Roxas, and mother of former Trade Secretary and now Senate aspirant Mar Roxas.

Ms. Roxas told the Inquirer on Friday how happy she was to find her eldest son inching closer to the footsteps of his father, a former senator, and grandfather, the late President Manuel Roxas.

"I think that is his vision. I will support him all the way—his plans, ambitions and projects," said Roxas of the wealthy Araneta clan.

She said destiny has always been in Mar's favor and if luck comes his way always, he would ever be more desiring in his chosen public career.

"Mar is a very dedicated person. Whatever he does, he does it with so much passion. God has given him so many blessings. He's intelligent, but he's biggest gift of all is that, he knows in the right place—the desire to help," she said.

According to her, Mar wanted to become a senator so he can continue serving his people on a national scale.

"On a macro level, he wants to be of help to the greater majority. You have to be in a high or position to be able to do that," she said.

Judy was here as an honored guest of Iloilo Rep. Alfredo Lopez and his wife, outgoing Calinaan Rep. and Gov. Imelda Lopez, at the Christmas party of the lopez-run Oca Foundation in Zarraga, Iloilo last Friday.

When her chance to speak came, Judy appealed to thousands of people in attendance to give her son a chance to serve them better.

She said down-line Mar knows the concerns of even the ordinary Filipino, the reason why he named the associates, Ms. Pabuaglas, while serving as trade secretary.

"He believed that the market is a microcosm of life, particularly in our country. Whatever happens in the market, happens in the Philippines but in a different dimension," she said.

Roxas, 46, was a Cojuc representative when deposed President Joseph Estrada resigned him the trade portfolio in 1998. He resigned through before Estrada was removed from power through a popular uprising. But President Macapagal re-appointed him.

# Armed robbers kill American

TACBILARAN CITY—An American national was killed inside his home near midnight Wednesday in Valencia town, about 40 km from the city.

Police investigators were considering anglers other than robbery in the murder of Robert Anderson, 63, because there was no sign of forcible entry and his belongings were "seemingly scattered not misplaced."

Five men, three of them sporting fatigue camouflage uniforms and armed with several short firearms, entered the Anderson residence in Barangay Carabuan, Valencia town about 11:45 p.m. last Dec. 10.

The suspects immediately attacked the sleeping Anderson, striking his head with a sharp instrument and stabbing him in the right side of his body, just below his armpit.

Anderson, of E-6277 North Seymour, Mt. Morris, Michigan, died on the spot.

The suspects then demanded money from Anderson's wife, Ma. Leyna Galemba-Anderson, taking off with P400 and P2,500.

Before leaving, the suspects, using a blue rubber rope, bedded Leyna in one of the house's master bedrooms she said she was able to untie herself. Elvie A. Pamilar, PDI Visayas Bureau

# OFW group to deploy volunteers for polls

COTABATO CITY—An organization of overseas Filipino workers from Maidanao said it would deploy an island-wide pool of volunteers to help safeguard the elections' votes during the 2004 synchronized elections for national and local positions.

The 200,000-strong Federation of Maidanao Overseas Contract Workers (Pedaco) on Friday said it are gathering some 5,000 headcounters and relatives of returnee Filipino workers for a series of activities, "first to help educate our relatives and their families on the importance of voting and the process of automated ballot counting."

The group said it was also tapping the help of retired overseas Filipino workers.

Pedaco, a member of the Philippine-based Global Filipinos, said the election-related program forms part of its commitment to the "growing advocacy for democratization so to strengthen bring in an already democratic society like the Philippines."

Daniel Maidana, Pedaco president, said his group would undertake a card-based education and information drive (IEC) for family members of OFWs on the conduct of the national elections.

He said the group's IEC program would complement its efforts at activities "based up to the spirit of volunteerism."

Maidana said Pedaco was also planning to expand its base poll education drive to Filipinos abroad who would stand to benefit from the absentee voting law.

He said the group also supports the absence of OFW-chief precinct level counting should be done in their host countries to avoid electoral fraud, as local in the working society. Noah B. Maidana, PIA Mindanao Bureau

# Aetas fear crossfire from NPAs, Army

By Sammy Orejas
PIA Central Luzon Desk

PORAC, Pampanga—With fatalis clutching his head and crouched in a corner of his relative's hut in the Pinatas resettlement here on Thursday noon, Apo Tonga Abugan looked every bit a bothered man.

He said the Aeta elder said, since the campaign season, some 8 has been subject to be used as targets of Pinatas Eschet, at 3 a.m., he left his clan of seven families out of barrels.

Asked why they fled, he replied: "There are soldiers in the village and they are all armed."

For this old man who witnessed the intense armed conflicts between the military and New People's Army during the 1980s, the clattering of troops right in the tribal villages foretended danger. The thought of being caught in the crossfire scared him.

"Ang ko nang sibilyan dapat ng mangsakitan ik is no evidence who suffer," Abugan said.

It also means uncertainty. The women and children in his displaced in rural Abugan, arriving from where they would return to Aetalia.

Worried over the safety of his grandchildren, he said it depended on the situation. "Dito ko lumaki ko dito ako mamatay," he added.

Adrol

INQUIRER Mindanao

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Assoc. Dir/News Ch. Alvendia

# Boxers struggle in round vs Hepa B

By Aquiles Z. Zonio
Correspondent
Cotabato City

THROUGH sheer determination, sacrifice and handwork, former World Boxing Council International mini-flyweight champion Zarlle Rodrigo managed to get to the top.

His childhood dream was to become a world boxing champion. The 22-year-old former world champion was just a step away from it when harsh fate intervened.

He was crowned WBC International mini-flyweight champion two years ago when he beat Pampanga-born title holder Manny Melchor in a 12-round bout held at the Fiesta Gym in Antipolo, Rizal.

He held the crown for less than a year. He lost to Fuentes Bathiller during his first title defense.

He had yet to recover from the sting of defeat when another poignant ordeal came. He was found positive of hepatitis B after a medical examination conducted by the Games and Amusement Board (GAB) in Manila.

At first, he felt as if the world around him was crumbling. He wanted to stop fighting but he was stripped of his license to fight. That even made him more dejected.

He trained hard to regain lost glory only to find out he is no longer fit to fight.

His malady compelled him to go home and find new partners.

## Family of boxers

Zarlle is the eighth child in a brood of 13. His father, a cigarette vendor, won a former professional boxer way back in Zamboanga City.

Aside from him, his elder brother Leonard, 38, was also a professional ring fighter. In fact, he was once a visible name of reigning world featherweight champion Manny Pacquiao.

It was their father who first honed their fighting skills and nurtured their passion for boxing.

However, only Zarlle, a Jonnalia/Del amateur boxer representing General Santos before making pro, rose to international fame.

## Big chance

Zarlle claimed his case isn't actually hopeless. He said his doctors assured him he has a big chance to overcome that he must undergo an intensive and continuous medication, the cost of which he could hardly afford.

He earned for himself a meager P15,000 when he vied for the WBC international mini-flyweight title. During his first title defense he was paid P75,000.

**No fight, no pay.** The money he earned from boxing could hardly support the basic needs of his wife and two-year-old son.

Life turned bad to worse when he learned he had blessed with Hepatitis B.

Instead of spending his little income for the needs of his family, he has to save it aside for his medication.

## Boxing to shoe repair

Just like most Filipino professional boxers, Zarlle failed to finish high school.

He could hardly find a job.

To support his family, he works from dawn to dusk at the shoe repair shop of his elder brother.

He earns P100 to P150 daily, an amount that could hardly make ends meet.

**There's no more budget for his medication**

Everyday, at the junction of Sinsuat road and Cotabato-Isulan-Lagao village here, Zarlle, clad in undersize shorts and shirt, could be seen holding plastic strings and needles, knitting and fixing worn up shoes and sandals.

He asked help from Mayor Peter Aduana Jr. but the mayor is still looking for a position suited to his qualification.

The mayor had also ordered city health officer Dr. Ruth Pessumato to find ways how the city would help Zarlle in his medical needs.

Zarlle was grateful to the local leadership for showing high regard even to forgotten boxing heroes of the city.

But, he said, his urgent need is to find any kind of job to support the basic needs of his family and buy medicine for his illness.

"I need to find a job. Once I am cured, I want to fight again. Boxing is not just my main source of livelihood, above all it is my passion since childhood," Zarlle said.

He continues to hope that it's not yet the end of his boxing career. He keeps on dreaming that one day fairy godmother would appear to whisk the calendar away.

## Another Hepatitis B victim

Aside from Zarlle, another promising boxer from here who contracted Hepa B was Abner Cordero.

Cordero, 23, was the reigning WBC International bantamweight champion when he was diagnosed positive of Hepa B.

Since turning pro, Cordero, a boxer-artist like Bacquian, won 6(4) in his 14 bouts. He was scheduled to fight for the vacant championship when GAB broke the shocking news to him.

He was perceived as one of the most promising boxers of the country.

Cordero, a son of a photographer and the eldest among a brood of seven, is appealing for help.

The two hepatitis patients were not aware where they acquired such kind of ailment.

Hepatitis B is an infection of the liver, which can be serious or fatal, caused by the Hepatitis B virus (HBV). The virus is found in the blood and other body fluids of infected persons. It can be transmitted through sexual contact, shared needles, infected mother to baby (at birth) and by exposure of infected blood or body fluid to cuts or membranes.

## Mouthpiece sharing

Adriano Gallegos, local GAB chair and former boxing promoter, said Rodrigo and Cordero could have contracted the virus through sharing of mouthpieces during the early part of their boxing careers.

The two represented the city in various boxing competitions sharing their wins as one more honor.

Just like Pampanga, Rodrigo and Cordero were products of the "Boxing at the Park," a weekly boxing tourney here initiated by local boxing aficionados led by Gallegos in coordination with the city government.

The tourney started way back in mid-1990s with the objective of developing and discovering potential boxers from the grassroots.

The newly-discovered talents were then coaxed at the dilapidated boxing gym under the watch of Mekong Nacionales, boxing trainer here.

Due to lack of facilities and logistics, the boxers were sharing mouthpieces during sparring sessions.

**This prompted Gallegos to put up his own** boxing gymnasium located just beside the Family Country Hotel and Convention Center.

The gym, which is about 75 percent finished, is due for inauguration come Dec. 17 in time for Pacquiao's 29th birthday. The new world featherweight champion is among the guests invited to grace the occasion.

The boxing gymnasium, the first ever to be established here, will be conducive for training as it will be equipped with modern boxing and training facilities.

"I put up this gym to help the city develop and discover new talents. The use of the gymnasium will be free. But I am going to ask the city government to set aside some amount for the maintenance of the gym," Gallegos said.

# First true-blue Pinay to train for space travel

From page A1

Mora was born in Sacramento, California, but she went to school both in the US and in her family's hometown of San Jose, Occidental Mindoro. She finished an electrical engineering course at the Riichi University in Japan where she met her husband.

She is currently in Manila on vacation from her job as a pilot of the Pearl Fleet, a private aircraft service in Dubai.

She is using the time to meet up with colleagues from the Philippine Coast Guard, which she joined last year as a reserve pilot for search-and-rescue missions.

"It has always been my dream to travel to space, and I would be very proud to bring an honor like this to my country," Mora told the Inquirer last Wednesday.

"It would also help me show Filipinos that there was do anything is long they put their heart and soul into it," she said.

"It's a good thing to dream big. Even if ultimately you don't accomplish the dream, you will have a much more fulfilling life doing the very best you can and you give up no less before yourself."

WORLD. Mora also carries with a big possible dream.

GLOBETROTTER. Irene Mora (2nd from left) holds her own during a practice skydiving session in Thailand with other foreign nationals.

## Becoming truly Filipino

Before she began dreaming of space travel, Mora had already performed a yearning to become the first Filipino to be going up her American citizenship and legally becoming a Filipino.

"It's not that I love the Philippines," she said, when asked why she decided to switch citizenship. "I have a yearning more than being American. All people want to go to America), right?"

## Speaks 8 languages

Mora speaks several languages coming in her patronage that won her globe-trotting. Aside from Filipino and English, she can speak Japanese, Spanish, Arabic, Bahasa Malay and Turkish.

Mora is now studying Russian as she will be heading for the Yuri Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Center in the City next year under a training program offered by Space Adventures of Arlington, Virginia.

Space Adventures is the company that launched in 2001 the world's first "space tourist," Dennis Tito, an American.

Mora actually applied with the Philippine Aerospace for said Space Administration. (Three years ago, but her application remained pending after Nasa grounded its astronaut training program in the wake of the Feb. 1, 2003 Columbia space shuttle tragedy.

"So I looked for an alternative, which is Russia's cosmonaut program," she said.

Mora said she did so because she wanted to take advantage of her good health, youth and "up preservation."

## Physical training

Mora has completed various physical training courses, including scuba and skydiving, survival and survival, zero gravity exercises, and rescue courses.

While most people might wonder why those in desk-driving positions, Mora's shared heads with danger so he was when she left off a horse during an equestrian competition when she was a student in Japan.

She now considers her training as "big commitments."

The training, which she herself had paid for, were expected in between her piloting duties for Royal Fleet.

Mora joined the company when she was only 19 as a flight interpreter, one who acts to help the language barrier between the pilot and the control tower.

## Just like mom

The only girl in a brood of five, Mora idolizes her father and her mom is her supportive, "broad-minded" parents.

Her mother, a housewife, was the original astronaut fan in the family, naming her brothers Mirin, after the second man to walk on the moon.

But it was the only daughter, the second child, who inherited her mother's attention to space and air travel.

"My photographs as a young girl always had me holding a toy airplane," Mora fondly recalls.

Even as a young tot, Mora said, she inclined a desire to convey to outdoor extravagance.

The defined side of her was noticed by some of their Filipino neighbors who, watching her grow up, wondered what was wrong with this girl who played with jet planes and trunks instead of dolls.

"Akino mo naman ang mga ganoon walang dyanin kabili ka. Dyanin people don't have even a single dream," Mora said with a sigh.

## Hunting with dad

"Since I was 4, they had been telling me: 'You're just a kid. When I was 16, they were saying, 'You're just a woman, you have to stay home.' And I resented asking why. Our neighbors called their children like that."

"But my father! He would always say, 'Go for it, you can do it,'" said Mora.

She proudly recalled the hunting trips with her old man, and how he taught her hardcore how to ride a bicycle.

## All woman

But for all the toughness she had built up as a pilot and outdoor enthusiast, Mora swears she's just like any Filipina, she drops meticulously by the latest makeup and lingerie, and swears mangga at bagoong.

# 'GMA does not listen to peace advisers'

From page A1

Macalintal implied the President would do better to listen to Ermita who was the government's chief peace negotiator before taking on the defense portfolio. The presidential peace panel is now headed by Silvestre Afable, the chief of the Presidential Management Staff.

"He [Ermita] may be in a better position to understand and appreciate the dynamics and practical application of pragmatism and flexibility in the conduct of negotiation and non-violent conflict. It is unfortunate that those who succeeded him," Macalintal said.

"I believe that he also experienced frustration in his previous failure to win the peace, and the [MILF and the government could] make use of their previous interactions so we won't say what went wrong," he said.

## Smooth transition

During the meeting, Esmael said Misuari was divested that the transfer of leadership from the late MILF chief Salamat Hashim to Al Haj Ibrahim Murad had been smooth. He said the MILF central council said there was no division and in the ranks, everybody is united.

Macalintal said that while he was the choice of Salamat to succeed him, he voluntarily offered the position of MILF chief to Al Haj Murad.

## Non-Muslim groups

In a related development, the MILF's head of political affairs, Khaiam Ibrahim yesterday said the group had a "frank and candid" meeting last Monday with representatives of non-Muslim civil organizations to address the issues of Mindanao's non-Muslims, particularly the Christians whom he refer to as "descendants of the migrant settlers."

Ibrahim said the consultations was the MILF's response to the clamor from this sector for the rebel group to answer some issues, such as how the peace agreement would affect them.

The MILF has been seeking the support of Mindanao residents for the peace process.

## Wary about intentions

Christians and non-Muslim residents of Mindanao, including the indigenous tribes, are wary about the MILF's real intentions because of the rebel group's secessionist and Islamist orientation.

Christians form the majority of Mindanao's 20 million population, only 18 percent of whom are Muslim.

"The non-Muslims clearly want to clear doubts on their status under a government to be run by the Bangsamoro, whether it is genuine autonomy, federal, less-associated to an independent state," Ibrahim said.

He said that during the meeting, Civil representatives raised the issues of social justice, rights to life, liberty in fact and abode, the right to economic opportunity and equal distribution of resources and natural resources under a government run by Muslims.

Ibrahim said the MILF guaranteed that the people of Mindanao would enjoy equal rights.

## Ancestral domain

On the issue of ancestral domain that would also affect the indigenous groups, or lumad, Ibrahim said, "Our immediate problem now is the liberation of our traditional homelands before it is proper for us to proceed to the delineation of our ancestral domain and traditional territories."

But he said that agreements entered into by Muslim leaders in the past with the lumad would be respected and upheld.

These include the covenant or territorial boundaries entered into by Sultan Mohammad Dipatuan Quduarat I with the Manobo and the Subanon tribes during the 17th century and a similar agreement by Sultan Amirudin Ulto with a respect from Rajah Siay Tuan Guzman, PDI Mindanao Bureau

MILF Vice Chair Abdulaziz Mastura extends hand to Jaime Ongpin, director general of the Center for the Promotion of Peace and Development of Mindanao for a one-on-one meeting on the peace process.

# SMB-Coke do-or-die tiff today

Game 1: SMB 4, Coca-Cola, 3-0
Game 2: Coca-Cola 2, SMB, 1-1
Game 3: SMB 4, Coca-Cola, 2-1
Game 4: Coca-Cola 4, SMB, 3-1
Game 5: Coca-Cola 2, SMB, 3-2
Game 6: SMB 4, Coca-Cola, 4-3

By Jane Navarro

IT'S a do-or-die Sunday for San Miguel Beer and Coca-Cola as their sibling rivalry reaches boiling point in Game 7 of the Samsung-PBA Reinforced Conference Finals today at the Araneta Coliseum. Game time is 6 p.m.

The Beermen forced the nail-biting affair after topping the Tigers, 85-80, in Game 6 Friday night that silenced readers of both competing ballclubs to their first ever wins in a best-of-seven decider.

Coca-Cola coach Chot Reyes will gun for a fourth coaching crown since bringing his craft to the league nine years ago while San Miguel Beer mentor Jong Uichico attempts for his ninth title but one of them had even gone the distance to the Finals.

With all of their cards already laid out after six championship games, Reyes and Uichico will now pin their hopes on the players who will roll the red carpet for them to reach the promised land.

"There are no secrets anymore. Lahat ng kaya nakalabas na. The team which will play hardest and smartest will win Sunday's game," said Uichico, whose last championship with the Beermen was in 2001 all-Filipino Cup.

Reyes, who steered the Tigers to an All-Filipino Cup Finals ensue as their rookie mentor last year, shared the same sentiment.

In a tournament supposedly dominated by the imports, the locals have been standing out, especially with the Beermen, who are carrying a limping Dwan Johnson on their backs to keep their hopes alive in the series.

Johnson's bum leg pains again as he was clutching his left thigh most of the time in Game 6, which will leave Danny Ildefonso, Glenn Rivera, Mr. Pettiford, Dorian Pena, Bryant Victoria, Brandon Brantmeyer and Jose Mesina no choice but to take the load off their import.

The McCluey will again try to explain the mismatch versus Johnson while Rudy Hatfield and Jeffrey Cariaso depel off the local SMB challenge along with Josh Jones, Johnny Abarrientos, Bill Wennie, Bob Wainwright and Ato Morales.

## Mavericks end drought in LA

LOS ANGELES—Dirk Nowitzki had 27 points and 12 rebounds and Antoine Walker added 27 points and 18 rebounds to give the Dallas Mavericks their first win in Los Angeles for 13 years, 113-93, over the Lakers on Friday.

The Mavericks, who had not won a game in Los Angeles since Dec. 12, 1990, took an early lead, dominated for much of the game and then mounted a determined Laker comeback. Reuters

Complete results: Denver 88, Philadelphia 71; Minnesota 93, Washington 85; Boston 114, Toronto 113; Indiana 103, Atlanta 82; Miami 89, Memphis 83; Cleveland 92, Detroit 72; New Jersey 98, Orlando 86; Milwaukee 106, Chicago 86; Sacramento 100, Utah 88; San Antonio 96, Golden State 89; Dallas 113, LA Lakers 93

# Young Guns kicks off jungolf sked

THE SECOND staging of the popular Young Guns at the Legends on Friday (Dec. 19) in Manila Southwoods will kick off a busy tournament schedule for local junior golfers during their holiday break.

The Young Guns, according to tournament director Luigi Villoria, is an 18-hole stableford for players aged 12 years and below and patterned after the III Kids world championship in Virginia where 149 players like Jovic Arellano and Ali Ramos had already won the past two years.

It also pairs a special focus on the youngest players of the Junior Golf Foundation of the Philippines, bringing together both the seasoned campaigners as well as the up-and-coming talents.

Trophies and prizes are provided by tournament sponsors Smart, Jollibee, Hino Isuzu, Dairy Free Philz, Maxxis Sports Plaza, Seoul, Gatorade, International Container Terminal Services Inc., Shareholdings and Golf Depot.

As of the last count, there were already 25 girls and 35 boys in the registry. The best scorer is allowing practice rounds at a discounted rate.

Aside from Ramos and Arellano, also among the entries are Mo-an Legaspi who had just won her first major international title in the Sanrush Chief Minister's Cup and the established Miguel Talusan.

"After a very successful inaugural year, we felt that the Young Guns has the potential to become a major competition not just locally but also of international scale. We're looking forward to that next year," said Talusan.

Aside from the Young Guns at Southwoods, other events lined up for the Jungolfers are the Nike Jungolf Christmas Tournament at Orchon and the Nike Olympic tourney at the Cebu Country Club which will be held on the same day, Dec. 21. On Alabang International on Dec. 21 and the Japan-Philippines Friendship Meet early next year at the Tagaytay Highlands course.

For inquiries, call the Jungolf Secretariat at the second floor of the Makati Golf Club in Bel-Air through 893-01-99 Local 60 Ext.

# Rivera, Carandang share honors at Legends

HECTOR Rivera of Alabang bagged the overall title while Fred Carandang of Southwoods emerged the low gross winner in the recent Senior Care Fellowship Golf Classic at the challenging Legends course of the Manila Southwoods in Carmona, Cavite.

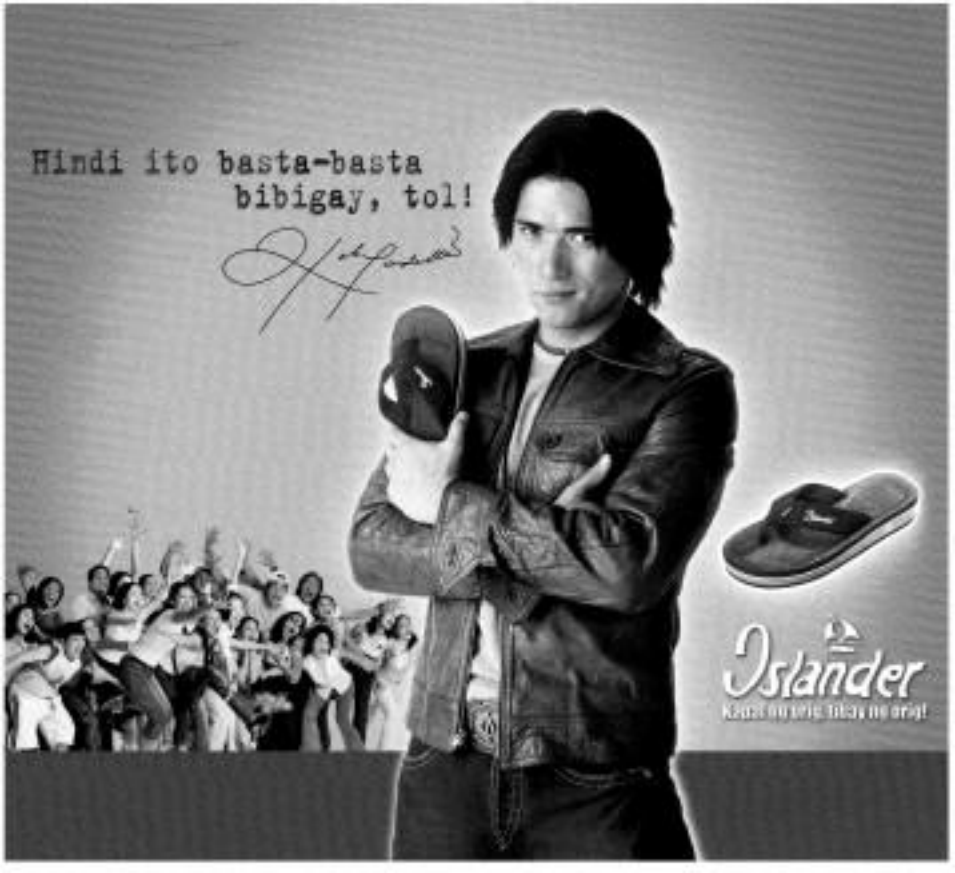
Rivera, scoring 37 net points, and Carandang, turning in an impressive 3-over par 75, finished on top of a huge field of 120 players who saw action in the revival of the event for emerging seniors organized by the Federation of Inclusive Golf Clubs Philippines Inc.

Winning the other division were Bert Lagaya of Southwoods for Class (55-59 years), San Juan Lee of Eagle Ridge for Elder (60-64), Teodoro Zamora of Valley for Statesmen (65-69) and Southwoods resiry Arthur Ocon for Veteran (Golfer). Leo Javier topped the guest division.

Sponsors for the Senior Care Classic are Diagen/Johnnie Walker, Interaction Professionals Inc., Asian Textile Mills, Century Park Sheraton, Deutsche Bank AG, Danby-Imbengco Group Management (AG) Inc., Bridgestone Philippines Inc., Taylor Rent, Milestone Steel, Makati Shangri-la Manila, Philippine Airlines, EL Jostiq Inc., Inchcape Golf Monthly and the Pearl Manila Hotel.

Trophies and merchandise items were handed out to the winners.

Lagaya's 65-point haul has him hosting Virgilio David (39P) and Rene Garcellano (Valley) by five.



# 8 men bolt QC, Makati jails; 9 officers sacked

By Tina Santos
and Margaux Ortiz

A POLICE precinct commander, a jail warden and seven jail guards yesterday lost their posts after eight more under-their-custody inmates managed to escape from the Quezon City and Makati City jails.

Supt. Silvia Manuel-Ina, Jaro, commander of Central Police District Station 8 in Quezon City, has been held responsible for the early morning jailbreak, in his precinct and was immediately relieved pending the outcome of the escape, Director Dimaporo pending investigation.

In Makati City, a jail warden and seven jail guards were relieved when a Chinese inmate managed to escape from his cell at the Makati City Jail at around the same time.

The seven men who escaped from the Quezon City precinct—Melvin Pinaud, Fausto Angeles, Roger Basad, Joel Tinaco and Ricardo Bonilla, Leonardo Samonte and Edwin Pido—were arrested for theft and robbery-holdup.

According to a report, the inmates escaped at around 12:30 a.m. The seven men allegedly used their bare hands to pull out the iron grill of the window in their jail cell.

The unrevealed audio would have allowed the prisoners to escape by just simply applying force to pull out the grill from the window," according to a police officer's report.

Upon hearing of the jail break, CPD director Chief Supt. Napoleon Estero immediately ordered the relief of the jailers.

Ina Jara was replaced by Supt. Benigno Guerrero.

Chief Supt. Arthur Alli, officer-in-charge of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology yesterday relieved Makati City Jail warden Chief Insp. Rojo Quimsaray following the escape of suspected drug lord Ling Kay Bun at around 1:30 a.m.

In a radio interview, Alli said the suspect may have escaped when jail officers Reynaldo Pascual and a certain Lozada asked permission to buy food outside at around 11 p.m. on Friday after conducting a prisoners' head count.

Ding, also known as Tony Lee, an alleged member of the 14K Chinese Triad, was arrested in a raid on condominium unit on Valero Street, Salcedo Village in 2000 after yielding the kilos of suspected shabu.

Alli said the suspect was given "VIP treatment" inside the jail, shunning his cell—complete with electric fan and television—such as his private quarters.

Alli said the jail officials will be placed under investigation to look into the possibility of connivance between them were no telltale signs of a "forced escape."

Princess, the golden retriever who found the bomb, standing by her handler Noel Buendia. (GMANEWS)

# Dog sniffs out bomb in Greenhills mall

Front page A10

hermetic booth at the Greenhills Shopping Complex in San Juan, shortly after 7 p.m. Friday.

The canine's sensitive nostrils can power on itch, which services the surrounding lines, at just a few feet away from the booth where the bomb was placed.

The bomb itself stands in the middle of the shopping center's main covered pathway.

According to senior Supt. Arturo San Antonio, San Juan Police chief, the bomb was initiated to disrupt the power supply outside the commercial zone, which is the only of those we reported by held.

PO1 Noel del Rosario, chief of the town's EOD/IED (Special Weapons and Tactics-Explosive Ordnance Disposal) unit, said the IED could have shrapnel ball as lethal.

The bomb is owned to school, he added.

Although the bomb would do little damage to a building, or even a concrete post, it is still potentially lethal to human targets, del Rosario said.

The EOD/IED dismissed the bomb at around 9 p.m.

According to Vilma, he came to the board to see after closing his mouth when he saw the canine in the corner.

He said he sensed something wrong and he called Noel Buendia, Princess' handler.

"I was researching black so I told Princess to search," Buendia said. "The reaction was immediate. She sat in front of it and refused to leave."

Princess belonged to a generation of bomb-sniffing dogs which were born and raised in the Philippines.

To make sure Princess got it right, Buendia called another bomb-sniffing dog, Barbie, a veteran K-9 officer.

Turbo-motivated Princess' handler, said Buendia, who has been the dog's handler since she was a year old.

Aside from Princess and Barbie, Mayor Ejercito has another dog responding to training for bomb-detection.

Together, they subscribe guards to secure the area until the SWAT/EOD team arrives.

POLICE officials inspect parts of an improvised bomb that was found and defused in the Greenhills Shopping Center Friday night.

# PDI employee loses ₱3M to con artists

AN EMPLOYEE at the Philippine Daily Inquirer lost more ₱300,000 in assorted jewelry after a member of her household was duped by gift-taking con artists in Quezon City on Friday night.

Insp. Marcelo Marasigan, Follow-up Unit chief of the Criminal City Police Station said that it would only be a matter of time before the suspects fall into their hands.

Melly Cortes, 32, a housemaid of Pedro Parkland, 42, PDI accounting department employee and resident of Bonifacio, Quezon City, was able to identify one of the suspects—Gerald Sori, 22, a property caterer and resident of Sta. Mesa, Manila.

Robert said Cortes, a native of Quezon City, received a phone call from one of the suspects and was made to believe that her employer had met an accident and needed cash to pay her way through.

The maid was then told to go to a certain spot in Elementary and that the jewelry was to be taken by the caller, whom Cortes took to be an associate of her employer.

Fearful only because of the incident when she got back from work. Tina Santos

# An officer and gentle mother takes charge

By Tara Quiaranta

POLICE Insp. Brenda Valeroso Lim is more than just the sum of her many titles. Aside from being a multilingual criminologist and law graduate, Lim is the commander of the Meycauayan Police District community precinct on Polanco Street in San Miguel, Manila, a Muslim community.

On top of that, she is a wife to a billion police officers and a mother to three kids.

For this police officer, who has been in service for 23 years, juggling two full time jobs has kept her on her toes—with or without heels.

It's all a matter of management, with a little help from others, said Lim, whose unruly black hair and wide eyes, which open to complete relief on equally wide smile, would belie her Chinese origins.

Lim reports to work as early as 6 a.m. to take on a job usually lasts 24 to 36 hours.

## Commander

"She usually comes here earlier than we do," said PO1 Hindo Pelotes, who is among the 18 personnel under a female officer working under Lim. "There are times when we wouldn't see her. But she is already in her office."

Aside from directing field operations, Lim handles paperwork, compiling statistics and signing up incidence reports in the community-level anti-crime server center.

And when militant groups decide to stage rallies in Manila's on a Sunday—Lim's only day off—she acts as deputy ground commander under a female officer at the United Nations park that is about to her precinct at the foot of the Jones Bridge.

"Even when I am at home, I have to monitor events over the radio because you'll never know what could happen next moment," said Lim, who would usually get home at 9 p.m., except when duty calls her to stay longer.

Lim, who never planned on becoming a law enforcer, cited God as the one who chose for her. He also the Palawan province because of her experience and her knowledge of the Muslim way of life.

## From China with love

"Police officials know that I had a background on how they lived because I grew up in a community in Quiapo where there were many Muslims," said Lim, who spent her childhood in a one-story Spanish-style house in front of the San Sebastian Church and Plaza del Carmen, not her present workplace.

Her father, Chua Chong, settled in Manila with his mother, Margarita Valeroso, whom her father had met in Davao.

Chua, who later changed his name to Jose Lim, was just a young boy when he set foot in the country.

## Close-knit

He married in the country before the Second World War, by taking to a job which his merchant relatives were championing by sea from Amoy, China.

After the war, Lim's father opened a small business in Recto.

Lim's father, who is Lim described as an intelligent and Cantonese and Lim, who has Chinese, proved invaluable for a young Teochew, who agreed to live with the newspaper as a Lim relied the rest of his career. It's were well picking stuff up from the corner of his.

The family moved to Manila, where his father opened up a Chinese restaurant.

Lim's mother passed away in 1998. Nine years later, her father died.

"The family was very close-knit," Lim said. "Although our parents were strict, we knew that they were just concerned for our welfare."

In fact, the family members talk to a rule of different languages.

"My father spoke to us in Chinese, and my mother sometimes got jealous because she did not understand us, so she spoke to us in Tagalog," said Lim.

Lim later became fluent in Chinese, Teochew, English and Tagalog.

## Interpreter

It was Lim's ability to speak Chinese that led her to the job she has grown to love.

"There was a homicide investigation of a Chinese who was killed in the old Lambo Restaurant. I was just a trainee then, but they asked for my assistance to act as interpreter during the questioning of the victim's relatives and witnesses."

That was in 1979, when Lim graduated from the Philippine College of Criminology.

Lim took up criminology after her parents rejected the idea of her studying fine arts and engineering.

She said she wound up at the PCC because it was the nearest school that offered a pre-law course.

She became an officer at a time when it was not fashionable to be so.

## Slow rise

"My classmates talked me in to taking a qualifying exam to become a policeman. It was Martial Law then, and there was a high demand for women. When the results came out, my classmates did not pass, but I did. ...I saw it as a challenge."

Lim, who as a child was often scolded by her parents for being too clumsy and for falling off the stairs, has received many promotions and awards, including commendations and medals.

It took her 10 years before she was promoted to the rank of inspector.

"Sometimes it takes me longer because I feel like the male officers get promoted faster, and it's obvious that other officers are pulled over me. But it challenges me at the same.

## Dragon year

It was in 1988, a dragon, year—which the Chinese consider lucky—that Lim fell in love and married a fellow police officer, in November that year, they had their first child.

"My siblings advised me to give birth that year, because according to Chinese tradition, a woman of Chinese blood should have a child born in a dragon year," said Lim.

That luck held true for her two sons, Robin Joey, now 23, and a graduate of the Dalubhasa Polytechnic College.

Her only daughter, Francis Jane, 16, is also a scholar at the same school.

As for her youngest, Robert Ryan, 2, the girl to play with him at home.

## Take it or leave it

Despite being in a job with a battered image, Lim said that she would do her level up high each time she does the uniform.

"I am proud of being a police officer. ...I believe we are needed," said Lim.

Lim, who has many times been given service awards, including a medal for exemplary performance in 2000 and seven medals higher than her medal, said that what really matters is getting the job done.

"It's a labor-&-or-leave-it job. If you can't take the heat and the pay, you can leave anytime. But as for me, the police officer's blood is already flowing through my veins," Lim said.

And fulfillment both in her job and her family is what has made Lim whole.

# Reward up for Pinoy wanted in Hong Kong

By Lolo Salaverria

THE NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation is looking for Filipino Manalili, a domestic helper who is wanted by the Hong Kong police for allegedly killing two persons there earlier this year.

The Hong Kong police has also put up a HK$400,000 ($51.6 million) reward for anyone who could provide information that would lead to Manalili's capture. The Security office, however, will expire in February 2004, according to the BBI.

The US Embassy had also expressed interest in the case because one of the victims was a US citizen. The principal decision of the BBI is spearheading the manhunt.

BBI agents prey to the case said Manalili had been operating as a worker in Pampanga but had visited Manila several times.

MANALILI

Another BBI official also said that the human body is considered as precious with the Manalili family for the protection of the accused. The BBI even reportedly ordered the suspect's family the safe-crowd, but the Manalili family refused it down.

Manalili is accused in the country by April this year, days after Filipino Angelita Ming and Jean Ying Mae were found dead inside their home in Shatin, Hong Kong. Manalili was their boarding.

## MetroBriefs

### Killing suspect falls

POLICE arrested Noel Ocampo, 32, for the killing of Philippine Normal University professor Clarence Nuez in Manila late months ago. SPO2 Dave Gamido of the Western Police District said three of the Dino Manila suspects in Ruiz's younger brother inside the station's apartment at the 1100 building in Sta. Mesa last days before the police station commander on Dec. 28. Inspector Dionisio said another suspect is still at large. Ocampo, it said to be members the police. Gamido said robbery was the motive of the late suspects. Cathy Estimorca

### Snatcher nailed

KILLY Tuesday, 24, for being seen in surveillance allegedly robbing a medical student, Sandra Galvan, at the Monumento public market in Caloocan. Galvan City. SPO2 Evangelista Abdon said Galvan was walking when Killy, carrying P4,500 in cash and her cell phone, snatched P3,000 in P5,000. It seized P 20,000. Abdon said Killy then off-duty one-star had happened not

### Stranger on a bus

A SUSPECTED shoplifter, Alberto Lalaquino, 32, of Caloocan City, was arrested yesterday and is set to charge for the theft of a shoplifter from Caloocan City.

Lalaquino committed a commotion when he pretended that there was a bomb inside a Pantranco bus at around 1:30 p.m. Lalaquino claimed around the bus to evade when the cops on board asked him what was happening and subdued the suspect. Tina Santos

# Serna; 65

STEVE Serna passed away on Friday after a heart attack. He was 65. Mr. Serna's media-related manager in the News and Public Affairs department.

Serna, fondly referred to as Sir Steve by his GMA family, was among the first to venture in TV commercials and documentaries. He was also known for his humorous on-location reports for seven children in Quezon City.

His remains lie at St. Peter's Funeral Homes on Quezon Avenue. Interment will be announced later.

# Search on for Metro's . . .

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singit Barangay Marijan, San Juan; Barangay Addition Hills, Mandaluyong; Barangay Mira Nila, Quezon City; Tagaig's Barangay Dasmariñas, Barangay's Barangay San Roque, Las Piñas' Barangay Pamplona Dos, and Pasay's Barangays 49, Zone 7.

The winning barangay, which will be announced on Dec. 17, shall receive P 100,000, while the 13 finalists will get P30,000 and a certificate of commendation, Godinez said.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

METRO

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2003

SUERTRES 4 6 3

SIX DIGIT (Announced on Dec.)
3 5 1 2 4 6

6/42 Lotto
6 9 22 23 25 15

Mega Lotto
6 11 25 38 36 41

# Search on for Metro's cleanest, dirtiest

By Margaux Ortiz

TRUE, it is time for a clean Metro Manila after all.

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority's search for the cleanest and dirtiest communities in the province to celebrate what similar contests have failed to accomplish in the past, according to DRRMA Head Operations Center Director Jo Lim-Kaw Leachon.

We wanted to determine why a significant portion of Metro Manila still considers dirty despite the numerous contests for the cleanest barangay come to power years, bodies told.

The Garbo division said that through the DRRMA, three years, they discovered that cities and municipalities only included the same select barangay units in the contests.

"There 'cleanest' barangay cannot be presentable enough to begin with, while the more remote and neglected ones are ignored," Gadiano explained.

But next year of 1,695 barangay units in Metro Manila, the local governments only submitted 196 to the MMDA's cleanest barangay contest.

Gadiano said four teams from the agency will evaluate the remaining 1,499 barangay units "to see which will qualify for the different tiers."

"Local government officials obviously do not want to reveal their dirtiest communities or are still deceived in terms," Gadiano said.

He said the agency is still in the process of identifying the filthiest communities in the metropolis, the results of which they will submit to the Department of Interior and Local Government for appropriate action.

Meanwhile, Gadiano said the MMDA has already come up with the 10 finalists for the cleanest barangay awards.

Qualifying for the final round are Caloocan City's Barangay 60, Zone 6, Malabon's Barangay Baka, Navotas' Barangay Bagumbayan (North), Valenzuela's Barangay Pio Del Pilar, Barangay Ugong, Pasay's Barangay Apelo, Makati's Barangay Santa Pilar, Quezon City's Barangay Bahay Toro, Mandaluyong's Barangay 469, Zone 46, Mandaluyong.

(with A.J.U.)

## *Dog sniffs out bomb in Greenhills mall*

Luige del Puerto

MANILA, Philippines — A search warrant served on Friday night netted more than a pound of explosives, including nails and ball bearings, that could have been used in bombing incidents during the Christmas season, police said.

Police, acting on the search warrant issued by Judge Jesus Mateo Joseph, Metro Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 204, searched the residence of Jaime Ang Ty, 57, at 1 Greenhills Avenue, San Juan City.

Police said they found 1.2 kilograms of explosives, 1,000 pieces of nails and ball bearings, and a timing device in the house.

Ty was arrested and charged with illegal possession of explosives.

Police said Ty's arrest was the result of a tip from a confidential informant.

Police said they found the explosives in the house after a police dog named Bullet sniffed out the explosives.

Police said Ty is a member of the Chinese Triad, a criminal syndicate.

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2003

# ENTERTAINMENT

E-mail at ...

Lilac Louie C. Carreiro

THEY'RE BRANCH: Back (from left) Jerry Tan and Vic Del Rosario; front, Kim Chiu and Gerald Anderson

# All of F4 back for Dec. 26 show

YOU think you've seen the last of the sensational Taiwanese boy band F4 in Manila this year?

Not forever's.

First-time promoters Sol Set Productions Inc. is bringing the phenomenal pop quartet to Manila on Dec. 26 in a full-length concert at the Polo Antiporo Open Field.

This time, all four handsome young lads are sure still be coming at the same time.

The concert comes at the end, "F4 Love Happy New Year 2004," will be the third time in two years that all four members—Jerry Yan, Vic Chou, Ken Zhu and Vanness Wu—are performing in one show together.

The boy band, assisted by fame after their TV series "Meteor Garden" hit it big, internationally.

Chris Cahill of San Miro Global Entertainment, the firm that will manage the concert, said that so far, the concert's four-zone price scale, where ticket prices are P20,000 and P15,000 have been nearly oversubscribed by about 5000 F4 fans from Taiwan, Hong Kong, Japan and Indonesia.

Still available at Ticketworld (891-9999) are tickets for P10,000, P8,000, P7,500, P5,000, P3,000, P2,500, P1,500 and P800.

Two of the F4 guys, Jerry Yan and Vic Chou, were guests at the "Happy 2003" concert of ABS-CBN last Nov. 29, also at the Polo Antiporo Open Field.

The two others, Vanness Wu and Ken Zhu, performed at the Philsports football field in Pasig City last September.

In their Dec. 26 show, the pop idols from Taiwan will sing their hit singles "I Can't Lose You," "Season of Fireworks," and "Can't Help Falling" from the phenomenally popular telenovela "Meteor Garden," shown on weekdays on ABS-CBN.

Tickets are also available at all Powerbooks and Bookstore outlets. For more details, call 891-2433.

Sunday BIZ

E-mail sy_business@inquirer.com.ph

Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Reyes

# He learned from people who cared

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

IT took Enrique and Co. Ltd. Partnership chief operating officer Ken C. Dolino II 17 years to get his college degree but the lack of a diploma did not prevent him from becoming president of one of the country's biggest transportation companies at 32 and landing direct reports who had mastered and doctoral degrees.

Dolino was able to do the seemingly impossible because he put in 25-hour days and worked twice as hard as the next person to be deemed worthy of his promotions.

Dolino learned the value of putting in an honest day's work as early as in grade school when he delivered shoes at the public market of his hometown of Dumaguete.

Every Saturday at 6 a.m. would hear an alarm clock ringing for the coming week.

He looks to his grandmother as his "inspiration" and one person who taught him the value of hard work.

"I have an extraordinary work ethic as much for my adoptive family left behind by a son who died very young," he says.

He tells the boys in his family to open themself to new experiences because he had to help his mother put food on the table.

His father passed away at 33 when Dolino, the second of eight children, was 11. The children had to help out in any way they could because their mother's salary as a public school teacher was not enough to make ends meet.

## Shoe-shine boy

"I earned about 25 centavos every time I delivered shoes. I was very good as it. Up to now I still find time to shine my shoes every now and then, although most of the time, someone else does it for me," he says.

## First Job

Despite the extra work, Dolino remained a very good student, graduating valedictorian from grade school and high school in Dumaguete. He entered the University of the Philippines Diliman on a scholarship but quit in his last semester of BS Geology to work and help his younger siblings earn their college degrees.

"I helped my younger siblings finish college and it was only when the last one graduated that I went back to school to obtain a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration degree from the University of the East," he says.

Even he worked as a bank salesman and sold Gilbert's encyclopedias.

"While I was good at it, there were days when sales would dry up. Since I was living alone for a while, there were days when I would eat only one dessicated meat a day. I had friends who would lend me a few pesos from time to time," Dolino says.

His first regular job was as a credit investigator with Manila Bank, owned by the Puyat family when he was 20.

He impressed the owners enough that after three years, he was transferred to a sister company, or 11, became general manager of a fish aquaculture company and vice president of another company.

He stayed with the Puyat group for seven years, had a short stint with JB Lhuillier and, in 1979, joined a group of distressed companies run by a creditors' syndicate, one of which was transport firm Philippine Shipping (formerly Philtranco Shipping).

## Turnaround artist

That started his career as a "turnaround artist."

Philtranco then was a struggling bus operations in Bicol and Quezon on the brink of bankruptcy. Dolino and his team were able to turn its operations around.

By the time he left in 1986 to go to the United States with his family the company had annual revenues 15 times what it was when he first became Philtranco's president in 1979. Philtranco also expanded its operations to include Eastern Visayas and northeastern Mindanao.

He came back to the Philippines in 1988 to take on the presidency of Philippine Pigi Farms and help in the 1992 campaign of now Senator President Franklin Drilon, his father's comrade.

"The Pigi job was a tough but fulfilling one. I joined the company in the middle of a strike. In the subsequent CBA negotiations two years later, my luck held...the unions and management agreed on the new terms without going through a strike," he says.

"When I left, I had recommended that the Filipino owners sell their shares to the Japanese pork-producers if they were not prepared to put in more capital to make it outside the market leaders. Several years after my departure, the Japanese consolidated to ownership of the company," he adds.

From there he moved on to become general manager of the Jardine Davies Group and in 1998, joined Ayala Land Inc. and was responsible for projects in Visayas and Mindanao.

"Cebu was a great assignment but I was living away from my family. After almost four years of living a bachelor's life in Cebu, I decided to go back to Manila to reconnect with my family. But not before I boldly stood up in front of the Ayala executive committee to explain why in Cebu, I have to be doing very well," he says.

Dolino then shortly after joined with the Ongpin group as one of its most challenging turnaround assignments because the company is an ultra-conservative, low-profile operation.

"In 2004, the owners decided to reorganize and professionalize. I was lucky to have a management team from the major shareholder groups and they literally gave me a "blank check" to reengineer, retrofit and reinvent the company. I also had the good fortune to recruit a top-caliber management team and their efforts are now bearing fruit," he says.

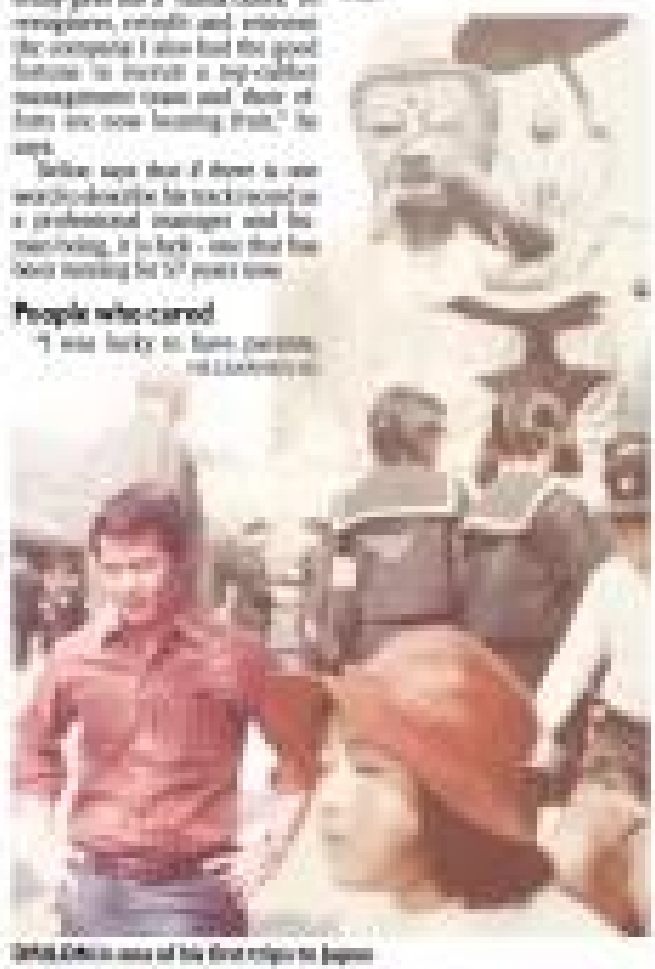
Dolino says that if there is one word to describe his track record as a professional manager and his coaching, it is luck – one that has been running for 17 years now.

## People who cared

"I was lucky to have parents

DOLINO: Loving life

DOLINO: During his down-moving days



DOLINO: In one of his first trips to Japan

PAUL and Grace Gapuzo

# Volunteers make a difference among kids who cannot read

By Yolanda Batiste-Fuentes
*Philippine Junior Bureau*

BAGUIO CITY—Dressed in their Sunday best, some of which were buttoned, frilled, bowed, bibbed, and/or generally overdosed from "depressor" that not-liked their worn readers.

Yes, these children did not attend kindergarten where basic reading is taught. They were enlisted from Grades 1 to 6 classes in eight elementary schools that, for some reason or another, had not mastered reading skills and comprehension.

Happily, these STARS (students at risk of non-readers) have graduated in their reading skills after completing the five-Saturday Culture Mentor Program (CMP), a flagship program of Cultus Drive Team Volunteers in cooperation with the Limnological Autumn Foundation (Lasaf), the Dagupan Bangui Jaycees, the Mountain Kanigan Club and the Lady Bulldogs of Calaoiza.

Why are these questions readers?

"It's mainly an economic problem," Cherry Pinga-Ramos, Cultus corporate communications director, says. "Most of these children belong to poor families with many children that the parents can hardly devote time to teach each child."

But aren't the children supposed to learn reading in school?

"Yes, but most of the time they come to school with empty stomachs so they can hardly concentrate on their studies," Pinga-Ramos says.

Further, school teachers, given children passing grades, thus enabling them to enroll in the next grade level out of "pity."

It turns also learned that unrewarded heads, en "give up" and "pass the headache" to the next grade level teacher. As a result, some children graduate from the elementary program without knowing how to read.

But because of a Department of Education mandate, non-readers cannot be given passing marks and must stay in the grade level they are supposed to be.

"This is why the Cultus Mentor Program was born. We wanted to help the public schools in mentoring the children," says Pinga-Ramos.

Public school teachers, who handle classes of 60 pupils, are not at all insulted but are even grateful that nurturing programs by private companies are entering the picture.

Parents, who have grown up on their children's ability to read, are also counted on the program on the first day.

ELEMENTARY pupils who have difficulty in reading learning to read in Filipino and English.

Pinga-Ramos says the children were given pre and post tests on reading, like into the program has a success rate of 69 percent. The children are also given grooming lessons such as taking a bath daily and brushing their teeth.

Since some of the beneficiaries are from different barangays, they are given free meals, aside from snacks and lunches.

The children who did not pass the post-test on reading were allowed to graduate, too, but would be given more lessons by the volunteers of the Lasaf Foundation.

Comprising the 40 volunteer mentors, who hands all issues for five Saturdays, were 100 **senior Cultus employees and business partners**, their friends and relatives. A persistent desire and a native desire to help underprivileged became visible. The youngest mentor was Andrew Buenig, 14, a high school student and a son of a Cultus executive.

After becoming a 14-year-old boy and a 12-year-old girl, the young Buenig says "It was not hard doing it and even felt good" having helped children just about his age to learn the rewarding.

Cultus retailer Enrico Figueroa, president of the Dagupan Bangui Jaycees, says it could be the one-on-one tutoring "full of love and attention" that inspires the children to learn.

Cristella Legaspi Pasaig, Andrew's mother, says at first reluctant to have her young son participate in the program. "I was not sure if he would like it," she recalls. But I told myself that young boy was an opportunity as I mentioned reading him and asked him to take a bath before attending the 8:30 tutoring session. He did, but he still had that "ayaw" look. I asked him why he took a bath, he said to be done so I could relax to bath with clean water."

But on the recognition day, Jonathan was most proud of his own personal prize and plaque. "I borrowed," Pasaig says and his grilled hair was neatly combed.

What did the volunteers, otherwise recognized in their comfort zones, derive from the program?

"It's the quite an achievement on my part, learning patience and how to deal with different moods of children," Pasaig says.

The BC investor Inocencio Yusi kindly asked to be quoted as he could gave them graduation gifts, aside from the gifts from Cultus.

The Dagupan "class" was the fifth batch of the Cultus Mentor Program and was the first outside **of Metro Manila. The CMP last three years the** program started in November last year. It aims to bring volunteerism to a passionate level.

The program is envisioned to include mentoring of other basic subjects like science and mathematics, but for its pilot project, it seeks to address at least two of the country's major concerns: the alarming rate of non-readers in elementary schools and the need to balance the private sector's role in helping out classrooms, particularly in helping over-loaded educators handle the special remedial classes.

The program is unique because Cultus has gone beyond giving the usual financial sponsorship to collaborate with private companies. It also offers "sweat and time equity," inspiring employees to give up a one-day training and turning it to public schools.

Pinga-Ramos says "Volunteerism is deeply ingrained in the Cultus culture. We believe in being part of the solution. It is the mission of the Cultus Drive Team Volunteers not to engage with the community but to embrace it. We have also initiated the program to expand nationwide."



PAUL and Grace Gapuzo

# Book puts God in business

By Margie Quiapo-Eglico

THE BOOK, "The Purpose Driven Life" by Rick Warren, made such an impact on Grace Gapuzo that she tells it like author-company's vision well.

Grace runs ABS Herbs, maker of the food supplement made from sweet bitter herbs. She is running what she calls a "purpose driven company."

Together with her husband Paul, Grace redefined their company's purpose and refocused its vision in order to be more from the viewpoint of God.

"It will help book, "The Purpose Driven Life," however, describes itself as being "more than a book; it is a guide to a 40-day spiritual journey that will enable you to discover the answer to life's most important question: What on earth am I here for?"

Grace believes in the book that she has given away 3,000 copies to the country's political and business leaders, hoping they would read it and change their priorities from one of self-centeredness to genuine concern for the people. She is set to give away 2,000 more copies this month.

"Operating in a country plagued by multiple crises—in leadership, the economy, peace and order—the ABS Herbs Company resorted to putting its own house in order in a corrective measure approach to face the various challenges," Grace says in a paper on the firm's new direction.

Because of the book, Grace adopted the following changes:

• Worked on the company's products to be manufactured as "GMP (current good manufacturing standards of the Bureau of Food and Drugs).

• Rediscussed Org management with experts from local and global companies, partnering with a respectable multinational distributor.

• Implemented new operating systems and procedures, and upgraded employment policies, fueled by and training.

So far, Grace says, the impact on the business has been greater efficiency in the factory and increased investments of expenses.

Before there was a disregard for rules but now everyone is more accountable. There is improved benefits. There is now a fresh talent of change and harmony," Grace says.

"Real transformation of the company would start from the individual itself as manager. Real change would start from the heart of the individual. A change of heart would mean a change of mind and consequently action," some ABS new mission statement.

ABS management and staff go through a regular interactive orientation twice a week which aims to help lead them to the realization that God is and can be a real partner in business.

Grace says the impact of such sessions has resulted in a greater team-mentoring effort becoming a passionate among its friends, an invisible monetary lessening in the beginning of "positive," and a total stranger dropping his plan to pursue a master's degree to enable to gain more knowledge about God.

Grace says the Saint "Faith goal for 2004 is to reach 1,000 companies, churches and groups through people empowerment by sharing "The Purpose Driven Life."

# Construction giant builds its first village in Cavite

PRESIDENT of DMCI Holdings Isidro Consunji explains the development to Cavite Gov. Ayong Maliksi

DMCI Homes, the housing division of construction giant D.M. Consunji Inc., recently launched Villa Alegre in Carmona, it's first project in Cavite.

Villa Alegre is near the Manila Southwoods Golf Country and Country Club and the San Lorenzo Leisure Park in Cavite. It is near schools, nearby grocery and future parks in Alabang, Muntinlupa City and nearby Laguna.

What's noticeable is the perimeter wall encircling the area. Villa Alegre is a gated community with 24-hour security. High-end features include 6-hectare lifestyle adult and kiddie pool, playground, basketball court, jogging path, elegantly designed multi-level clubhouse with function rooms, and well-landscaped areas.

It is a 6.6-hectare development comprising of only 389 houses in units from 36 square meters (single) to 127 square meters. The standard unit features two bedrooms, two toilet and bath, a maids room, provision for service utility area, a car port and a foyer or garden. Bigger units are also available.

Lots go for a minimum of P6,000/sq.m. Pre-selling P1.6 million for price, 20 pesos to pay, 10 percent downpayment. Inspectors, call 888-2333.

A recent issue in the Philippine construction industry, DMCI prides itself on its engineering know-how and that built the nation. Incorporated in 1954, DMCI passed a pioneering legacy in the construction of the country's landmarks. Among such landmarks include the Cultural Center of the Philippines, Manila Philippine plaza, Makati Shangri-La and Rockwell Center, to name a few. Today, DMCI adds to its list of notable achievements a resource that will help Filipino families build their dreams.

# He learned from people who cared

From page B1

grandparents and relatives who looked out for me. I was lucky to have reached a woman who stuck with me through thick and thin and who encited it easier to be a full-time mother to three wonderful children. I was lucky to have met many role models and selfless mentors in my profession. All the who helped mold me into what I am now. And I was lucky to have friends who reached out to me in my times of need," he says.

**Great influences**

He considers his father to be one of the greatest influences to his life, even if he was only around for school rituals.

"My father instilled in me a passion for excellence. I remember his coaching me for a declamation contest. He asked me to repeat the piece over and over until I could pronounce 'people' correctly. He would not let me go until I got it right. I was already crying with frustration because I could not get 'people' right. I must have tried a hundred times. But I learned the virtue of excellence. I, of course, won that contest," he says.

His mother, on the other hand, taught him the softer things in life —the sing, smell the flowers and appreciate cute things.

His uncle, former Agriculture Undersecretary Joe Debuc Jr., taught him generosity. It was by the time he finished his college education, while a grandparents and

DING DONG was only enrolled in academics but in extracurricular activities as well. Here he joins other Boy Scouts during a parade.

DING DONG finishing a 22-kilometer run as Photo not provided

namesake Prof. Ben Debuc (who later became the first Filipino president of the Central Philippine University in Iloilo), provided his board and lodging.

"He also taught me the value of a sense of duty. He was assigned duties and he would go faithfully. I see that one very there out. The duties of a father and husband came up to this very hour. I also learned the word 'integrity' for the first time from this great man. With the milk, he would tell us," he says.

"And to all of these, because of my late Dad's ideal beginning, I had the odds that I had to overcome to survive. He has taught me to have a high tolerance for pain," he adds.

Debuc also considers himself blessed to have received the people who brought him up the corporate ranks. The first was Manuel Pacis, whom he describes as a visionary. "He was one hero I studied to dream big dreams because of him."

Ruby Lopa was another visionary, he says. "He dreamed of a self-contained economy with his group of companies. Again, mental loss got in the way and he lost the dream. He was a marvel with people, especially the rank and file. Even after he lost his dream, he kept his dignity. He taught me compassion. And when the political winds turned in 1986, he never took advantage of the situation, every only because he later became President of the country," he says.

Amadeo del Rosario, on the other hand, taught him management, more skills. He deepened his love for marketing and management education.

Another powerful influence was former Finance Secretary Jesus Estanislao. "I became president of Philbroders, a commodity hedge company at 32. When that good fortune came, I enjoyed the perks to the hilt. Jess reminded me that there are more important things in life than the thrills of a professional success and their rewards. He brought back God in my consciousness and the value of family. He taught me how to find Him in the middle of the world. Life is a continuing struggle for inside that heart-to-heart," he says.

Debuc has achieved more of what he has set out to do, but he continues on dreams. His time to give back to the community and to the society that have been so good to him and his family.

"After I accomplish my assignment and meet my goals in DMCI and Co., I would like to teach, write books and, perhaps serve in government. I want to continue and intensify my involvement in the education sector. I envision a Don Bosco public and corporate governance and responsible citizenship. I want to help to the restoration of Iloilo City as the Queen City of the South," he says.

Considering his lucky streak, it would come as no surprise if Debuc would fulfill those dreams, too.

"I am just lucky, but maybe one of these days the law of averages will catch up with me," he says in jest.

# Those who eat pan de sal, please rise tall

CUENCA, Batangas—If the previous record is none of the forty-winks of the bakers is a factor for just one night, Manileños need have pan de sal on their breakfast tables the next day.

This is what Lucita Chavez, the vice president of the Philippine Federation of Bakers Association Inc., says of this Batangueño staple pan de sal baking.

Chavez estimates that in Manila, over 90 percent of the bakers are from Batangas, particularly from the town of Cuenca.

"Pan de sal-making is the life and 'Ube is the heaven and glory of Cuenca's pan de sal bakers," Chavez says. "Even the mayor of Cuenca used to be a pan de sal maker himself."

## Globalization

Although Chavez' Batangas has been expanding, he admits that pan de sal-making needs a lot of improvement, especially now that the country has been flooded with bakery chains and franchised bakeries.

"Batangas has been successful because we were able to innovate, which is a good defense mechanism against globalization," Chavez discloses. "But the Filipino bakers must learn the pains of globalization," and to say, many of the small bakeries have decided to stop operations. That's why the Federation and the Department of Trade and Industry have launched the 'Pinoy Pandesal.'"

Chavez' line 'Ube, the federation, with its founding chair Restituto Hernandez, has been lecturing to bakers all over the country and telling them about the Pinoy Pandesal.

Where is mentioned here Especially, "pan de sal" means "bread of

Lucita Chavez of the Philippine Federation of Bakers Association Inc.

only."

For centuries, the Filipino breakfast table was not complete without a cup of brewed Barako (Liberica) coffee and warm pan de sal.

From a bakery can't be considered a real bakery if it doesn't sell pan de sal for the morning.

## Bad publicity

While the bakery business was stable until the late '90s, the issue of the fermented pan de sal came up. Former health secretary now Sen. Juan Flavier called it as the carcinogenic pan de sal. This started the collapse of the industry.

The situation worsened with

THE PIVOT pan de sal is fortified with Vitamin A, microbind salt, and a 100 percent bromate free.

the onset of bakery chains and imported bread.

The influx of imported breads from cereals, the standard breads. But in western countries, aggressive the situation.

"The issue of fermented pan de sal in the late '90s was not the fault of the Filipino bakers. This issue was present in all the flour that the government allowed to come into the country," Chavez says. "When that issue hit the bakers all over the Philippines, followed by imported bread, the pan de sal industry collapsed."

Researchers propose it is a carcinogenic additive that was used as moisture builder and emergency for the flour. Most flour have some enzymes during the milling process, the additive was used to handle the flour better.

"But there are also some additives that are utilized to replace because that are not carcinogenic such as natural enzymes and ascorbic acid. When the Food and Drug Administration banned fermented flour in the evening non-bromate flour came in. By that time, most Filipino bakeries had already collapsed.

"The Batangueño bakers were not ready for the sudden fall of pan de sal and turnover issues of the unused additives that could replace bromate. After the bromate controversy and the collapse of the pan de sal industry, the market was flooded with imported bread.

"The other problem is that the bakers were not aware of the modern techniques of baking," Chavez says.

## No help

When pains the Batangueño bakers, Chavez says, is that during the collapse of the pan de sal industry, no one from the provincial government of Batangas stood up for them.

"I admire the provincial government officials of Cavite because during the red ride issue that threatened their shellfish products, they were in the markets and in front of the media and the public, they ate the fresh shellfishes just to prove to the people that their shellfishes are not 'poisonous,'" Chavez says. "But here in Batangas, the coffee industry died in Lipa City (the place where the Philippine coffee industry was born, but we one among our provincial government officials lifted a finger to prevent that."

"Now the bakery industry is already a dying industry and again, the same thing, nobody in the provincial government rendered a helping hand," Chavez laments.

Chavez says it was the bakers' federation who stood up against the closures of the pan de sal industry.

## Hope

It was only late last year, when DTI Secretary Mar Roxas met with the bakers' federation, that they saw hope coming.

"He told him about our dying industry and our plans to solve it. The result of our meetings was the 'Pinoy Pandesal,'" Chavez says. "Pinoy Pandesal is a formula-free from fortified with Vitamin A and iron-iodized salt."

The new Pinoy pan de sal is baked using a scientific standard formulated only for baking it.

"Sadly, up to now, the recipe of the pan de sal is not even standardized. You can still buy sweet pan de sal from the bakery, which is not good for most Filipinos," Chavez notes. "Let's face it, 80 percent of Filipinos are diabetic."

The Pinoy pan de sal has lower sugar content.

The Philippine Federation of Bakers requested Sen. Miguel Coseo last year to make the bromate-free flour, a blended flour formulated purposely for pan de sal making. It's now called Harina de Pan de sal.

## Bakers' training

Aside from managing Tina-payan, Chavez also lectures not only to fat-owl bakers but also to small bakers and bakery owners all over the country.

"We teach Filipino bakers to label, put expiration dates, scientific way of baking, accounting procedures and right management. We teach the bakery owners, too," Chavez says. "We teach them the right procedure to bake and to manage a bakery for them to be able to survive."

Chavez tells bakers to update themselves with the technology.

The bakers' federation and the DTI launched the Pinoy Pandesal in Cuenca, and for the first time in Batangas history a bakers' training and seminar was held in the town where majority of the country's bakers were born.

## Saving the industry

"Ten years ago, Manila had 3,500 bakers; 800 of them are Batangueños from Cuenca. After the issue of the fermented pan de sal, the number has drastically diminished," Chavez says.

To create awareness of the plight of the pan de sal, the bakers' federation, and the local government, started the Tinapay Festival last May 15. In this year's festival, the Cuenca Bakers' Federation gave out 120,000 pieces of pan de sal for free.

For Chavez and the entire bakers' federation, the fate of the pan de sal will not forever the long neglected path of the dying coffee industry.

"The Barako coffee may have vanished in its birthplace, but we still savor its the pan de sal till all the Filipino's breakfast table," Chavez stresses. Abi Magsino, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

# Bulgarian buffalo nourish kids; provide income to local folk

By Yolanda Sonio-Fuertes
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

URDANETA CITY—From the idyllic, pastoral community of Tulong some 26 fresh carabao milk that nourishes some 400 public I people of seven villages in this city.

The fresh carabao milk is produced by members of the Tulong Multi-Purpose Cooperative (TMPC), which is engaged in dairy production through the assistance of the Philippine Carabao Center (PCC).

Maximo Estrella Jr., TMPC chair, says the milk production project was started in 2996 when the PCC gave the members of the cooperative 40 female Bulgarian buffalo.

The buffalo distributed to TMPC members were already pregnant and the farmers only needed to feed the animals and wait a few days to milk them.

TMPC members were asked to "pay back" the PCC by giving the agency the first male offspring of each buffalo. The cooperative members could either keep the young buffalo or give them to other cooperative members.

Besides all community projects, the TMPC's milk production project in Urdaneta, the PCC's first experimental area, outlived its "terrible birth pains," says Gloria de la Cruz, a PCC technician.

De la Cruz says many members gave up their buffalo because of the initial hardships of rearing them. At least five buffalo died—two from giving birth and three from diseases.

Some farmers also lamented that the buffalo were "useless" because

A farmer in Barangay Tulong, Urdaneta City, gets milk from a Bulgarian Murrah.

those could not be used to till their farmlands.

Worse, no one was buying the milk that they produced.

"We even fed the extra milk to the dogs and pigs," Estrella says.

Perl say, some members accustomed their buffalo to the cooperative. Since these cannot be returned to the PCC anymore, the cooperative's officers, like Estrella, had to take the "unwanted" buffalo.

"This is how some officers ended up owning more than one buffalo," he says. He says assigning the unwanted buffalo seemed to be a "sacrifice" for TMPC officers in the first time.

Things started to look bright in 1999 when the Urdaneta Vendors Association bought dark-brown milk and offered them in the public market.

Yet, this did not last long since the residents of Urdaneta City, like most Filipinos, are not milk drinkers and stopped buying the product.

Later, some Indian executives in dairy and poultry areas learned of the TMPC's dairy production and started to buy milk from the cooperative. The Indians has since become the cooperative's regular customers.

The TMPC also entered into a memorandum of agreement with the Department of Education and the National Dairy Authority to supply fresh milk for the hospital's milk feeding program for elementary students.

Daily, the TMPC produces an average of 30 liters of milk, 20 liters of which are set aside for the milk feeding programs.

"We can hardly meet the demand now," Estrella says.

Since children easily get tired of the milk's taste, the cooperative has created a pasteurized chocolate-flavored milk by mixing fresh carabao milk with cocoa powder, sugar, non-fat milk solids, stabilizer and water.

From a Styrofoam, only pasteurizes the milk and prepares the "chocomilk," says each 200 milliliter pack of the chocomilk is sold at P8. The cooperative supplies 600 packs daily to the hospital.

Candia says the TMPC sells the fresh milk at P40 a liter to their trading buyers, their cooperative's sole buyer (loyal customers).

He says they could have got up to ten Indian buyers because "it was they who started getting at business."

Consumers are assured that the fresh milk coming from Barangay Tulong is safe for consumption.

The Department of Agriculture, with assistance from Mayor Amadeo Perez Jr., is always on hand to protect the animals from diseases through vaccination and deworming programs and providing them with the best animal care.

"They regularly undergo laboratory tests to ensure that they are healthy and free from any diseases," De la Cruz says.

The animals are fed with sugarcane grass that grows in abundance in the village. They are also given rice bran, sugar cane and "homemade" feeds made of dumb, copra, dicalcium phosphate and salt.

The carabao milk the animals yield is actually spreading about 30 minutes every morning for the purpose. An animal can produce between five and seven liters of milk each day giving the farmer about P200 daily. By 8 a.m., the milk must be delivered to the cooperative center, ready for pasteurizing and selling.

When the animals give birth, the milk they produce for the first seven days is exclusively for their young.

Candia says with the dairy production business doing very well, the attitude of their members who gave up their buffalo have changed.

He says everyone now wants to own a buffalo.

The cooperative owns 67 buffalo, 40 of which have already given birth. The remaining 27 buffalo have yet to give birth.

Only 13 of the original 40 buffalo have left from "expired" to the PCC, Candia says. He says the cooperative is planning to put up a store along the Urdaneta highway to sell fresh milk.

Mayor Perez says the most gratifying part of the milk production business is being able to ensure that the city's children are healthy through locally produced milk.

Sunday LIFESTYLE

# Irresistible breakfast for morning after 'noche buena'

EGGS Florentine

Chef Tony Boy Escalante whips up a power breakfast for Christmas Day

Text by Nanglo Bagas-Reyes
Photos by Johnny Vilbora

DO people eat breakfast on Christmas morning? After the *noche buena* feast the night before, it would seem hard just to get up.

But there are people who consider Christmas breakfast a special meal for families.

"Christmas Day is a time to spend with family," says chef Tony Boy Escalante of Antonio's in Tagaytay. "Therefore, it is an important meal time shouldn't be skipped. It jumpstarts our bodies and minds and prepares us for the long day ahead."

To start a busy day of socializing, the Christmas Day should begin with a well-planned first meal.

Escalante himself prepares a nice meal for his wife and two kids on Christmas morning, although this time without the pancakes, hash browns and sausages. The idea of a Christmas breakfast is something light yet creative and easy to prepare.

For the special breakfast, the chef whips up elegant Eggs Florentine—two poached eggs with smoked ham and spinach on English muffin, topped with Hollandaise sauce; the classic Steelan Eggs which comes with marinated salmon, onions, capers, sliced tomatoes, cream cheese and diced scrambled eggs, served with pasta; and a warm bowl of groats with low-fat milk.

The morning fare is best accompanied by refreshing fruit fruit shakes.

For making Eggs Florentine, Escalante says poached eggs are suitable. The egg should have a nice oval shape. For this, very fresh eggs should be used and a little vinegar should be added to the water for poaching.

"This helps make the whites coagulate tightly around the yolk, thus preventing it from spreading," says Escalante, who opened recently a new restaurant called All-Day Breakfast at Antonio's, also in Tagaytay.

The chef adds that stale watery eggs will spread, break up and loosen from the yolks. No amount of vinegar will make them look anything other than stale.

"It is very important, however, that poached eggs are not served straight from the acidulated water. They should be placed first in clean hot salted water to remove the taste of the vinegar."

For the Hollandaise sauce, a little warm water may have to be added to lighten the texture and make the consistency suitable for coating.

To encourage our readers to sit down to breakfast—even on a busy Christmas morning, here are Escalante's recipes.

### Green Apple, Strawberry and Orange Slush

Fresh fruits (green apple, strawberry, orange)
Sugar syrup
Crushed ice

In a blender, combine apple, sugar and ice and blend. Do the same with the strawberry and orange. Note: The amount of fresh fruit and sugar syrup should depend on taste and size of glass.

BREAKFAST 12

DRINKS. Green Apple and Strawberry Slush

# Irresistible breakfast for morning after . . .

From page 1C

### Gravlax & Eggs

1 kg salmon fillet
100 g sea salt
50 g sugar
1 g finely crushed white peppercorns
100 g coarsely chopped dill
2 tbsp Aquavit (available at Isetan)

Make sure that the fillet of salmon is scaled, free of bone, washed and dried. Cut into two equal halves. Place one half, skin-side down, in a suitably sized deep dish. Sprinkle with some of the mixed seasoning, dill and Aquavit. Cover with the other piece of salmon, flesh side down, and sprinkle with the remaining ingredients. Cover with foil or paper and place in the refrigerator or container for two-to-three days.

Separate the fillets and baste occasionally with the exuded juices. To serve, clean the stubborn of any adhering salt, pepper and dill. Cut into thin slices on the slant, allowing 2-3 slices per portion, and serve with lemon and brown bread and butter.

### Granola with Low-fat Milk

2 c old-fashioned rolled oats
¼ c wheat germ
¼ c coarsely chopped walnuts
¼ c white sesame seeds
¼ c shredded sweetened coconut
¼ c raw hulled green pumpkin seeds
2 tbsp canola oil
2 tbsp honey
1 tbsp ground cinnamon
¼ c dried currants, or to taste
Whole milk for serving
Sliced fresh fruit such as seven-tiers, peaches, bananas, pears, plums, mangoes or berries for serving (optional)

Pre-heat the broiler (grill). Place the broiler pan on the lowest rack. In a large bowl, combine the rolled oats, wheat germ, walnuts, sesame seeds, coconut and pumpkin seeds. Spread the mixture evenly on a large, rimmed baking sheet and put it on the pan.

Keeping the broiler door ajar, broil (grill), scrubbing the pan every 30 seconds while keeping the mixture evenly spread, until crisp and golden but not charred, 2-3 minutes. Watch the mixture carefully as it does not burn. Transfer to a large plate to cool.

In a small saucepan, over low heat, combine the oil, honey and cinnamon until warm, for about two minutes. In a large bowl, add half of the honey mixture to the granola and toss thoroughly to combine. Add just enough of the remaining honey mixture so that the granola clumps slightly but is not soggy. Stir in the currants.

Serve the granola with sliced fruits if desired.

Note: the granola will keep in an airtight container for up to a week.

### Eggs Florentine

2 Italian muffins
spinach, steamed with onions
2 slices ham
2 poached eggs

CHEF Antonio's idea of Christmas breakfast is something light yet attractive and easy to prepare.

GRANOLA with Low-fat Milk

For hollandaise sauce:
500 g butter
8 white crushed peppercorns
2 tsp vinegar
5 egg yolks
freshly squeezed lemon juice

For poached eggs, break the eggs into gently simmering water (approximately one part white vinegar to 10 parts water) using a suitably sized saucepan (three-quarters full. Simmer very gently for four minutes until the whites are firm while the yolks are still soft. Remove the eggs carefully with a perforated spoon and place from a basin of cold water. Trim off the loose edges. Reheat when required by placing the eggs in very hot salted water for approximately a minute. Drain on clean cloth before serving. Note: allow one or two eggs per portion for an egg dish.

For sauce, place butter in a pan and melt to clarify. Skim and keep lukewarm. Place in a well-tinned copper or stainless steel saucepan and reduce until almost dry. Allow it to cool, adding two teaspoon water.

Cook egg yolks, whisking continuously in a bain marie. Allow swirling until lukewarm while whisking. Add the melted butter gradually whisking continuously.

Pass through a muslin or fine strainer into a warm container. Adjust the seasoning with salt only. Finish with the lemon juice and keep at an even temperature of 38-37°C.

To assemble, toast muffins, top with spinach, sliced ham, poached eggs and pour hollandaise on top and broil. Serve at once.

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GRAVLAX & Eggs

SLOW-ROASTED Beef Belly

FRESH Codfish Vizcaina Style

BANANA-CHOCOLATE Filo Pastry Purses

# A classy Christmas lunch

Text by Vergie Baga-Reyes
Photos by Roger Carpio

EVERYBODY interprets and celebrates the holidays differently. For chef Jay Gamboa of the popular Cirkulo, preparing the Christmas lunch is a serious business.

"It's a time when families sit down together and have a nice lengthy conversation over a positively good meal," he says.

For him, creating a wonderful Christmas lunch means going for something different from the usual holiday offerings. Instead of roast chicken or pork, a version beef belly which is usually the piece de resistance in his house.

"Basic food in our home is serious business," says the good-looking, energetic chef. "It's only served during very special occasions, like Christmas, New Year or birthdays. It is very hard to resist a good roast."

However, since the price of prime rib and sirloin nowadays is nothing to shout at, Chef Gamboa offers an alternative: beef belly, which is just as tender as, even more flavorful than, the aforementioned cuts of meat.

"If you can find US beef belly, that will taste even better," he suggests.

A kilo of beef belly costs about P180/per kilo, compared to US prime rib worth almost P1,000/a kilo.

"You cannot afford to serve up a prime rib, you know—overcook it and waste it just like that. The beef belly is done your first alternative," Gamboa says.

Bonus fun! Belly is one of his top sellers at Cirkulo on Pasay Road.

Cooking the beef can be done a day before because it is slow roasted for a long period of time— four hours at the most, until the belly is tender. Bone and transfer to the fridge.

Paired with this part of Gamboa's Christmas lunch spread: Most people are familiar with Bandeja Vizcaina, the Spanish salt-cod dish with tomatoes, peppers, garlic, olives and almonds.

Store quality bacalao is often hard to find. If not too expensive, Gamboa makes his own—Fresh Codfish Vizcaina style. The result is a fondue and calories "bacalao." Again at a fraction of the cost, yet just as festive. He swims takes a little extra time and effort to make, but the resulting treat is scrumptious.

Gamboa's bowl of salad, tossed with flavorful dressing and finely cut veggies, fruits and nuts, makes for refreshing but substantial meal.

The apple salad with color and richness to his selection of lunch menu. In fact, the such an guests will appreciate this salad as a warm-while-waiting for the others to arrive.

To top the meal, the chef indulges with Banana-Chocolate Filo Pastry Purses. This dessert can be prepared less than an hour with relative ease. It is also very light, which is rather nice on Christmas Day when what usually comes out of the kitchen is advocacies rich and filling.

To help you prepare an extraordinary midday meal for Christmas Day, here are chef Jay Gamboa's recipes:

## Slow-Roasted Beef Belly

Serves 5-10
Ingredients
1 pc boneless beef belly or short plate, about 3-4 kg (ask your butcher for the "bottom" area of the cow)
¼ c whole peppercorns, crushed
½ c rock salt
2 heads garlic, peeled and minced
For the sauce:
1 c prepared horseradish (available at delis and supermarkets)
3 calamansi
2 tsp chopped parsley
Salt and pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 280°F. Combine crushed peppercorns, salt and garlic into a paste. Rub on top of beef.

Place beef on a rack and onto a roasting pan. Place in oven. Cook at 280°F for 4-5 hours or until tender. Important: Oven temperature must be this low to break down the connective tissues of the beef, resulting in a melt-in-your-mouth succulent roast beef.

Test for tenderness with a kitchen fork after 4 hours. Remove from oven, remove meat from oven and rest for at least one hour before slicing.

To make the sauce: Combine all ingredients. Mix well. Serve with beef on the side.

You may cook the beef two days before serving and keep in refrigerator. For reheating, slice beef into serving size. In 9" x 13" dish, add slices. Arrange beef slices overlapping each other in a baking tray.

Pour ½ c of stock or water over the beef. Cover with foil and bake in a 350°F oven for 15-20 minutes or until heated thoroughly. Serve with horseradish sauce.

You can serve this dish with steamed asparagus, sautéed and roasted tomatoes.

## Fresh Codfish Vizcaina Style

Serves 6-8
Ingredients
1 ½ Codfish fillets, skin-on, or any white-fleshed fish, like lapu-lapu or labahita
¼ c rock salt
For the sauce:
½ c olive oil
7 cloves garlic, sliced
1 c tomatoes, peeled, seeded, sliced
½ c white wine
1 c fish stock (made from bones of fish)
2 pcs red pepper, roasted, peeled and sliced
1 tsp Spanish paprika
2 pcs potatoes, peeled, sliced ½ inch, fried
1 k codfish fillets, sliced and salted
Salt and pepper to taste
Sliced almonds, toasted (optional)
Chopped parsley (optional)

Remove any bones from the fish; rub with rock salt; careful to place less salt on the thinner portions. Marinate fish in salt for 12 hours, then wash off and pat dry. Cut into 8 serving portions.

For the sauce: Heat olive oil in saucepan, plain garlic and cook until almost brown. Add tomatoes and cook until soft. Add white wine and simmer for 3 minutes. Then add the stock, pepper, paprika and potatoes. Let simmer for 5 minutes.

Add codfish and simmer for 5 minutes or until cooked through. Adjust seasoning. Transfer to serving dish, sprinkle with sliced almonds and chopped parsley, and serve.

## Salad with Apples, Walnuts and Gorgonzola

Serves 6-8
Ingredients
500 g assorted lettuce, Lollo Rosa, arugula, romaine, or Mesclun mix, washed and spun dry
1 pc carrot, cut into sticks
1 pc green apple, julienned
½ c walnut, toasted and chopped roughly
100 g gorgonzola, cubed (or any blue cheese)
For the apple vinaigrette:
½ c olive oil
1 c sherry vinegar
1 c honey
1 pc green apple, peeled, seeded, chopped
1 tbsp basil, chopped
Salt and pepper to taste

Combine all ingredients in a salad bowl. Mix the vinaigrette, combine all ingredients in a blender. Puree until smooth.

## Banana-Chocolate Filo Pastry Purses

Makes 12 small purses
Ingredients
For the filling:
1 (2½) unsalted butter
1 c brown sugar
1 pc orange, juiced and rind minced
1 ¼ c rum
400 g bananas, peeled and sliced
½ c chocolate chips
For the pastry:
6 sheets filo pastry
1 (2½) clarified butter

In a sauce pan, heat butter and add brown sugar until melted to light caramel color. Add orange juice and rum. Mix well until caramelized dissolved. Add sliced bananas to cool and orange zest. Set aside and let cool.

Mix in chocolate chips. Place 1 sheet filo pastry on your table, brush with clarified butter, and cover with another sheet of filo pastry. Brush again with clarified butter.

Divide the buttered filo pastry into 4 squares with a knife. In each square, place 1 tbsp of banana and chocolate filling in the center. Add up the 4 corners of each square and crumple to make a puno resembling a pouch. Repeat for the other squares. Continue the same with the other sheets of filo pastry until you have 12.

To bake, preheat oven to 400°F. Place filo pastry purses in a baking sheet, making sure they are not touching each other. Bake for 5-10 minutes or until golden brown and crisp. This goes well with vanilla ice cream.

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PARENTING a mean opinion of a meal

SALAD with Apples, Walnuts and Gorgonzola

COOKING the beef can be done a day before because it is slow roasted for four hours.

For chef Jay Gamboa of Cirkulo, a wonderful midday meal means going for something different from the usual holiday offerings

STUFFED Edam Cheese

CUCHINILLO stuffed with Paella Marinera

# The long Christmas dinner

HER version of the Christmas dinner is rich in tradition but distinguished by innovation.

Glenda Barretto provides recipes for the biggest and most unforgettable feast of the year

Text by Yanga Bugo-Reyes
Photos by Rudy Esperon

CHRISTMAS without the Christmas dinner is inconceivable.

"It's probably the biggest meal you'll cook all year, and it's all too easy to get completely overwhelmed," says restaurateur Glenda Barretto.

Yes, the chairman of Philippine cuisine has said it herself. Planning is essential to having the biggest and most unforgettable feast of the year.

Barretto's version of the Christmas dinner is rich in tradition but distinguished by innovation. It is also practical.

For example, the great thing about her Spanish-style turkey dish is you can make the stuffing in advance, leaving the dish anything happily in the fridge until about half an hour before dinner.

And who can resist the Cuchinillo stuffed with Paella with its crackling crisp skin covering its moist, tender, flavorful meat?

Barretto's dinner also takes pains with starters, which are often neglected in family dinners because they take up valuable time in the kitchen.

But starters, says Barretto, are what set the tone for the whole meal and help ease everyone into conversation. They're always worth the effort. With a little planning, they don't need much fuss.

So, for Christmas, Barretto has prepared the interesting and easy-to-make Stuffed Edam Cheese and Chicken Liver Pâté, which are best served with sliced baguettes or warm rolls.

And Barretto's Christmas dinner table is not complete without baked fish and Pastel de Lengua.

For a festive atmosphere, Barretto suggests we should not forget the obvious, such as candles and a nice tablecloth. Fresh fruits and fresh flowers on the table also add to the joyful look.

To match dinner this hearty meal and liven up the party, offer your host wines such as Chianti.

SPANISH-STYLE Roast Stuffed Turkey

### Stuffed Edam Cheese

1 whole Edam Cheese (about 14 oz)
½ c brandy
1 tsp Dijon mustard
1/8 tsp ground nutmeg
½ c butter, softened
¼ tsp cayenne pepper

Cut out a circle from center top of cheese. Carefully scoop out cheese inside, leaving shell intact. Use a curved small knife, such as grapefruit knife, to remove cheese at first; finish the job with small spoon, scraping carefully to avoid puncturing shell.

Place half of the brandy in a food processor. Cut larger pieces of removed cheese into cubes. Then add to food processor with mustard, nutmeg and butter. Whirl until smooth, gradually adding remaining brandy with motor running; occasionally stir down sides of work bowl with spatula. Stir in cayenne pepper.

Spoon cheese mixture into shell (not all the mixture will fit; refill shell as necessary). If made ahead, cover and refrigerate for 20-24 hours. Let stand at room temperature for about one hour before serving.

### Chicken Liver Pâté

½ kg chicken livers, cleaned
1 c milk
2 tbsp butter
1 medium onion, diced
1 tbsp garlic, minced
100 g pork fat, diced
2 pc bay leaves
1 tsp fresh thyme, chopped
½ tsp salt
¼ tsp black peppercorn, freshly ground
½ c brandy
1 c all purpose cream
French bread slices or toast, for accompaniment

In a bowl, soak the liver in milk for two hours. Drain well.

In a large skillet, melt 2 tbsp butter over medium-high heat. Add the onion and cook, stirring until soft for about 1 mins. Add the garlic and cook until fragrant.

Add the chicken liver, pork fat, bay leaves, thyme, salt and pepper and cook, stirring until the liver is brown on the outside and still slightly pink on the inside. Add the brandy and cook until most of the liquid has evaporated and the liver is cooked through but still tender.

Remove from the heat and let cool slightly. Discard the bay leaves.

In a food processor, combine the liver mixture and cream. Purée and add the remaining butter and pulse to blend. Adjust seasoning to taste.

Pack the pâté into a mold. Cover with plastic and refrigerate until firm. Serve with French bread or toast.

### Cuchinillo Stuffed with Paella

4 kg whole suckling pig, cleaned and prepared
2 tbsp sea salt
1 tbsp freshly ground pepper
2 tbsp minced garlic
**paella**
-all for basting
**For liver sauce:**
250 g pork liver
75 ml vinegar
2 tbsp oil
1 tbsp minced garlic
2 tbsp chopped onion
1 liter chicken stock
1 tbsp soy sauce
3 tbsp brown sugar
2 tbsp sea salt
1 tbsp ground pepper

PASTEL de Lengua

CHICKEN Liver Pâté

BAKED Whole Fish with Olive Oil Sauce

# The long Christmas dinner

From page C1

1 bay leaf
50 g breadcrumbs

Boil the cooled cavity of the pig with salt, pepper and garlic, and marinate for about 30 minutes. Spoon in the prepared paella. Sew opening with kitchen thread using overlapping stitches.

Brush the skin with oil and roast in a pre-heated oven, 180°C, for 90 minutes, basting with oil every 15 mins, then increase heat to 200°C and continue roasting for 30 mins or until the skin is golden and crisp. Serve with liver sauce.

**For liver sauce:**

Slice liver into 1/2-inch fillets and lightly fried, then joint the liver through a food processor while pouring in the vinegar in a slow, steady stream.

Heat the oil and sauté the garlic and onion for 2-3 minutes, then add the processed liver, stock, soy sauce, sugar, salt, pepper and bay leaf.

Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and allow to simmer for 10 mins. Finally, add the breadcrumbs, adjust seasoning, and stir until the sauce thickens.

### Paella Mariveva

100 g diced chorizo, sliced
2 tbsp olive oil
50 g minced garlic
100 g diced onion
200 g tomatoes, peeled, seeded and chopped
100 g red and green bell pepper, cut into strips
75 g chorizo bilbao (garlic sausage) sliced diagonally
2 tbsp paprika
2 bay leaves
100 g squid, skinned and sliced
200 g clams
250 g mussels
200 medium-size prawns, head and shell removed
450 g long-grain rice
1.25 litres chicken stock
tea salt to taste
freshly ground peppercorns
50 g cooked peas
2 tbsp black olives
2 tbsp chopped parsley

In a heavy pan, preferably a paellera, heat the olive oil and fry the bacon until the fat is rendered. Remove bacon and drain on kitchen paper.

Add into the pan the garlic, onion, tomato, bell peppers, bacon and sausage, and sauté for 3-4 minutes. Add paprika, bay leaves and seafoods. Simmer for two minutes, then remove seafoods and set aside.

Add rice and stock to the pan and season to taste with salt and pepper. Cook, until the rice is almost done, then replace the seafoods and add the green beans. Cover pan with a tightly fitting lid and cook until the liquid has been absorbed by the rice, for approximately 20 mins.

### Spanish-style Roast Stuffed Turkey

7 kg turkey
1 ½ cups
salt and pepper
**For stuffing:**
50 g garlic, minced
100 g onions, chopped
1.25 g bacon
250 g ground pork
750 g ground beef
200 g ham, chopped
2 pc chorizo Bilbao, chopped
150 g carrots, chopped
200 g red and green pepper, seeded and chopped
2 c chicken stock
100 g raisins
20 pc water chestnuts, coarsely chopped
2 bay leaves
2 tsp freshly ground black pepper
salt to taste
**For giblet gravy:**
2 c dry white wine
½ c all-purpose flour
9 c turkey giblet stock (including the reserved cooked neck and giblets)

Melt butter in a pan. Sauté garlic and onions. Add ground pork, ground beef, ham, chorizo, carrots, red and green bell peppers. When they are browned, add chopped raisins. Stir in the stock, and cook for a few minutes until the mixture is dry.

Preheat oven to 350°F. Stuff the turkey with the cooled mixture. Sew up the opening and truss the bird with string, tying the legs and wings close to the body, then put in oven.

Brush with melted butter for five hours, or until meat thermometer inserted in thigh of turkey registers 180°F. Remove from oven and let stand for 15 minutes before carving. Remove excess fat from the pan drippings and serve sauce with the turkey.

**For gravy:**

Skim fat from pan juices, reserving ½ c fat, and deglaze pan with white wine over moderately high heat, scraping up brown bits. Bring white wine to a boil and remove pan from heat.

In a saucepan, whisk together reserved fat and flour and cook over moderately low heat, whisking. Add white wine mixture and stock or broth in a stream, whisking, and simmer, whisking occasionally for 5 mins. Season gravy with salt and pepper and transfer to gravy boat.

### Pastel de Lengua

1 pcs tongue (approx 1.5 k)
1 pc small onion, quartered
2 bay leaves
Whole peppercorn
1 tbsp soy sauce
¼ c cooking oil
½ c olive oil
100 g slab bacon, cut into 2-cm cubes
2 tbsp garlic, minced
1 pc small onion, diced
300 g tomatoes, skinned and chopped
100 g carrots, scraped into balls
100 g potatoes, cocktail size/halved
75 ml red wine
1-.25 litres beef stock
100 g champignon mushrooms
50 g stuffed olives
2 tbsp butter
2 tbsp flour
Sea salt to taste
Black peppercorn, freshly ground
**For pastry:**
2 ½ c all-purpose flour, sifted
½ c butter, chilled and cut into small cubes
4-6 tbsp cream
Egg yolk combined with 1 tbsp water (egg wash)

Boil tongue in 6-8 cups of water with onions, bay leaves, salt, peppercorn until tender, for about 3-4 hours.

Peel off the white covering from tongue. Wash thoroughly and marinate in soy sauce. Heat the cooking oil in a large casserole and brown the ox tongue. Slice into 3/4-inch cubes. Set aside.

In another casserole, fry bacon in olive oil to render fat. Remove bacon and set aside.

Reserve 3 tbsp oil in casserole. Sauté garlic and onion, then add tomatoes. Continue to sauté for 3 mins. Add tongue, bacon, sausage, carrot, potato, wine and half of the stock. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and allow to simmer for 1½ 15 mins. Add mushroom and olives and cook for 2 mins.

Melt the butter in a separate pan, add the flour and stir well. Whisk in remaining stock until the flour is thoroughly cooked, then stir into the ox tongue mixture.

Remove from heat and transfer to a 2 litre baking dish. Allow mixture to cook before topping with pastry.

**For the pastry:**

Place the flour in a bowl and cut in the butter. Mash with fingers until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs, then add the cream and toss lightly with a fork until dough holds together. Roll out the dough between plastic sheets to a size approximately 2½ mm larger than the baking dish, then remove plastic and place on the dish.

Pinch edges of crust, brush top with egg wash, then make slits to allow steam to escape. Bake in a pre-heated oven at 200°C for 15 mins, until crust turns golden brown.

### Baked Whole Fish with Gherkin Sauce

1 whole fish (apo-apo or red snapper), approx 2.5 kg, cleaned and gutted
1 ½ tbsp salt
½ tsp black peppercorns, freshly ground
1 tbsp paprika
Juice of one lemon
1 head garlic, peeled and crushed
½ c onions, peeled and diced
1 ½ c tomatoes, diced
4 bay leaves
½ c olive oil
Garnish:
Gherkins, cut in half and sliced thinly

Preheat oven to 190°C or 375°F.

In a large baking dish, lay whole fish. Sprinkle it with salt, pepper, paprika, lemon juice, and salt all over the fish. Combine garlic, onions, tomatoes and bay leaves in a bowl, and drizzle with olive oil. Mix thoroughly. Spread remaining mixture all over the fish.

Cover the baking dish with foil and bake in a pre-heated oven for 45 mins or until fish is just done. Remove fish from oven and push the herbs and vegetables aside. Transfer fish into a serving platter. Carefully peel off skin of fish.

Strain juice from the pan and serve as a sauce/sauce and serve on the side. Arrange gherkin slices over the skinned fish to look like fish scales.

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THE MOST extravagant meal of the year

1

PLACE metal base plate on the floor and insert the aluminum tube. Secure the connection with a duct tape.

2

USING an electric inflator or a hand pump, inflate the round balloon.

3

BLOW up another red balloon to make a "duplex" (paired balloon). Tie both ends together.

4

MAKE another "duplex" to create a four-cluster set. Cut the middle part of the two duplex and twist. Then, make another cluster using white round balloons.

5

CAREFULLY insert the red cluster onto the neck of the base plate, twisting the two balloons in front to secure their spot. Insert the white cluster.

6

MEANWHILE, using a hand pump, inflate two red and two white twisting balloons. Then, make a cluster by combining the red and white duplex.

7

SLOWLY work your way up around the aluminum tube, alternating the red and white balloons.

A FESTIVE balloon cluster!

# Balloons to go

Text by Yvegin Baga-Reyes
Photos by Hugo Catan

Balloon decorating can be a fascinating pastime and money-saving hobby

CRAFTS

MAKING three out of balloons requires a little bit of skill and creativity, but it is very simple and fun to learn.

For this project, Bing Reyes, balloon artist of Pilmar Distributors Corporation, demonstrates a classic balloon design ideal as pillars or columns for the stage, dance floors, aisles or entrance doors.

You will need: a metal base plate to secure the décor, a transparent packaging tape, an eight-ft aluminum tube, an electric inflator or hand pump, a balloon sheer, 11" round balloons, 260" bending balloons and a pair of scissors.

You can get base plates and rods from your neighborhood machine shops.

Most balloons, whether round or long, can be purchased in bags of 100 or a cheap price. Pilmar (tel. 6710333) sells balloons and other balloon accessories. Pilmar is the authorized distributor of Qualatex Balloons, USA. Qualatex latex balloons (also known as rubber balloons) are made from 100-percent biodegradable latex.

To anyone with no interest in balloon twisting, balloon entertaining or the commercial balloon business, Bing also the exclusive licensee of Hallmark Cards, conducts workshops on classic balloon décor. It also offers impressive balloon decorating ideas from simple balloon centerpieces to giant balloon arches, all designed to enhance your special event.

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AS seven pieces, make a balloon twist. Using your left hand (particularly your index and middle fingers), make four loops of twisting balloons.

8

TO secure the balloons in place, grab the longest twisting balloon and wrap it around the tube. Twist and tie it tightly around the tube. Deflate excess air. Create another four-balloon cluster of red and white round balloons and place them on top of the aluminum tube.

9

12

MAKE a cluster of red and white twisting balloons and tie them all together.

AFTER them on top of the tube, fastening two balloons to secure their spot.

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10

INFLATE using a hand pump.

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